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THE FRANKS,

FROM THEIR FIRST APPEARANCE IN HISTORY

TO THE

DEATH OF KING PEPIN.

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BY

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TO HIS PUPILS,

FAR AND NEAR,

THIS WORK IS AFFECTIONATELY

Dedicated,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

THE conscientious man, who knows to what straits even the British Museum is put, by the influx of unnecessary books, will not lightly write, still less *publish*, a new work. The Author of the present volume seeks an excuse in the comparative novelty of his subject, and in the ready access he has enjoyed to the sources of Frankish history, many of which have only been cleared and rendered available during the last few years by able editors and commentators in Germany.

The following pages are the result of studies, the chief object of which was to gain an insight into the age of Charlemagne. They are offered to the public in the hope that they may throw some little light on one of the darkest but not least important ages of the world, when, in the early dawn of modern history, rude hands sowed the seeds of Christian civilisation.

The Author is well aware that he has chosen a subject which has not been found generally interesting,—which is looked on as the property of the troubadour or the fabling monk, rather than of genuine history. But he thinks it a legitimate object of ambition to alter or modify these views. If the glory of Athens gives a charm to the account of Dorian migrations, and lights up even the distant flitting shades of Pelasgi and Curetes,—if the gorgeous spectacle of Augustan Rome leads us to watch with interest the feuds and fortunes of the citizens of a poor and small Italian town,—there is no reason why we should remain indifferent to the primordia of the mighty race whose annals are the history of modern and Christian Europe—to the origin of the wonderful political and social world in which it is our lot to live.

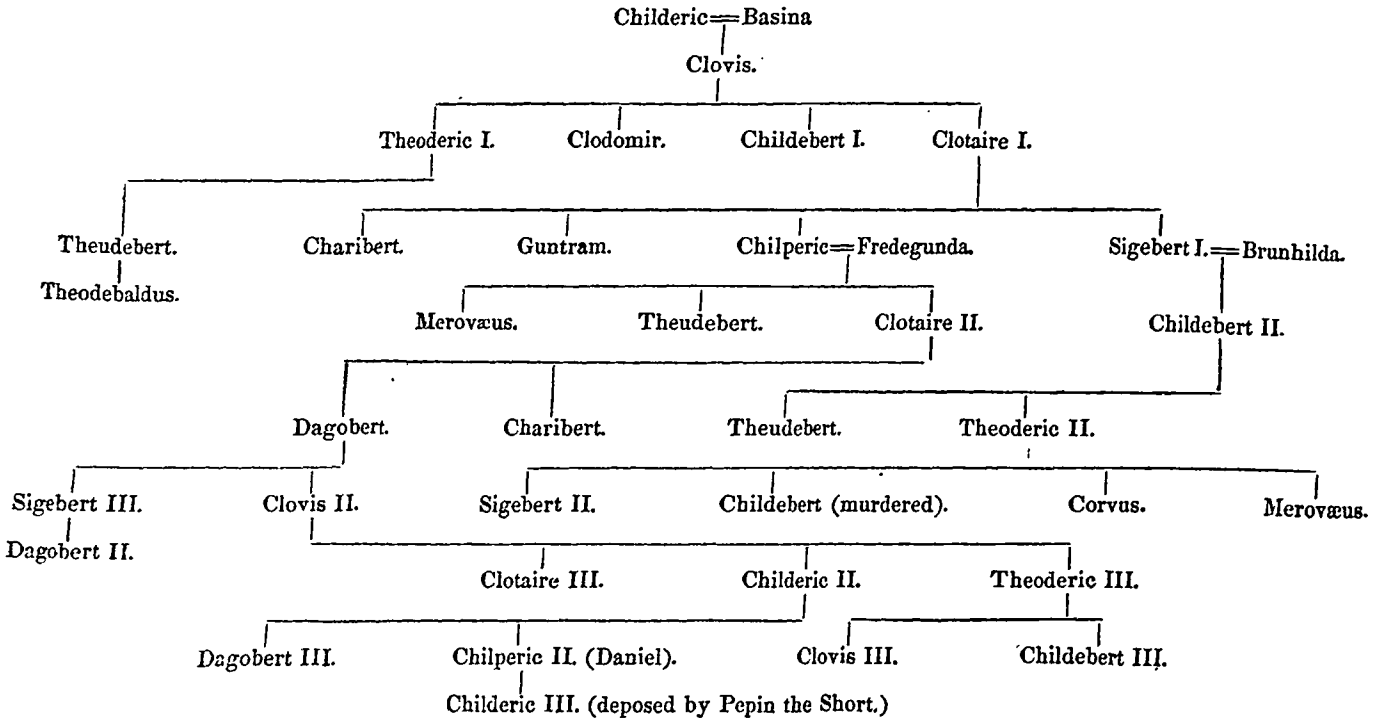
Should the present volume meet with any degree of public favour, the Author hopes to bring forward another, on the life and times of Charlemagne, to which this work, though complete in itself, might form a kind of introduction.

For the many defects which will be found in his book, and of which he is himself fully conscious, the Author begs the indulgence of his friends, on the ground that he has performed it in the intervals of a laborious and anxious occupation.

In conclusion, the Author cannot omit thus publicly to express his grateful thanks to Professor Ritschl, and the other librarians of the University of Bonn, for the courtesy and kindness with which they placed their valuable library at his disposal.

Bonn, May, 1857.

THE MEROVINGIAN LINE.



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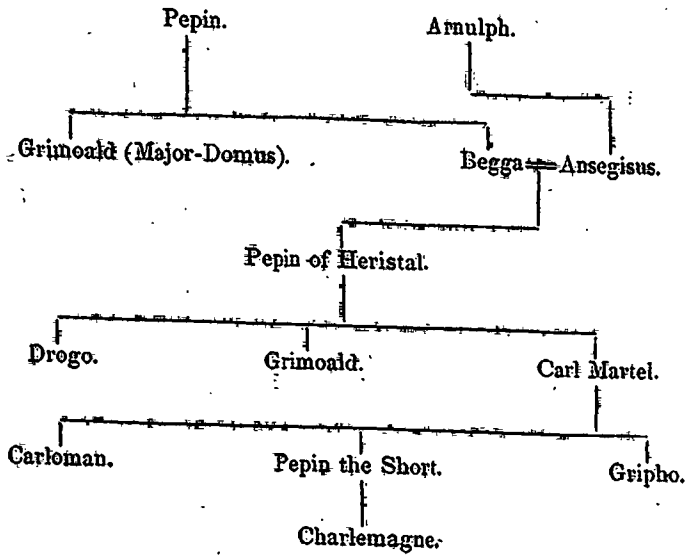

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ERRATA.

p. 121. lines 3. and 4 from bottom, for "the Frankish kingdom attained," read "the kingdom of the Merovingians nearly reached."

224. line 3. from bottom, for "Another son of Childeric" read "Another son of Theoderic."

THE FRANKS.

CHAPTER I.

If the Greeks and Romans are rightly called the people of the past, the Germans, in the wider sense of the appellation, have an undoubted claim to be considered the people of the present and the future. To whatever part we turn our eyes of the course which this favoured race has run, whether under the name of Teuton, German, Frank, Saxon, Dane, Norman, Englishman, or North American, we find it full of interest and glory. Majestic in stature, high in spirit, with fearless hearts, on which no shackle had been laid, they came forth from their primeval forests to wrestle with the masters of the world. They dared to meet the Romans when they were mightiest[1]; when their armies, schooled in a

[1] *Tac. Annal.* ii. 88.: "Et qui (sc. Arminius) non primordia Populi Romani sicut alii Reges Ducesque, sed florentissimum imperium lacessierit; præliis ambiguus, bello non victus."

thousand battles with the bravest foes, were led by "Danger's own twin brother," whose military genius laid the Roman Empire at his feet: and he himself has told us, that his tribunes and prefects wept with terror at the very aspect of their giant foes; that throughout his ever victorious army the Roman soldiers, on the eve of their first conflict with the forces of Ariovistus, were engaged in making their wills in the recesses of their tents.[1] This mere horde of undisciplined barbarians, with naked bodies, and swords so badly tempered that they bent at every stroke,—with no fortifications but their waggons, and no reserve but their wives and children[2], —rushed fearlessly on the finest armies that the ancient world produced, and came off with honour, and sometimes with success, according to the testimony of their not over-truthful enemies.[3] *Triumphed* over

[1] *Cæs. B. G.* i. 39.: "Hi neque vultum fingere, neque interdum lacrimas tenere poterant. . . . . Vulgo totis castris testamenta obsignabantur."

[2] *Flori Epit. Rer. Roman.* iii. 3.: "Nec minor cum uxoribus eorum pugna quam cum ipsis fuit; cum objectis undiquo plaustris atque carpentis, altæ desuper, quasi e turribus, lanceis contisque pugnarent." *Florus*, iv. 12.: "Quæ fuerit callidarium gentium feritas facile vel mulieres ostendere quæ deficientibus telis infantes ipsos afflictos humo in ora militum adversa miserunt." *Tac. Hist.* iv. 18.: "Hortamenta victoriæ, vel pulsis pudorem." *Tac. Germ.* viii.: "Memoriæ proditur quasdam acies, inclinatas jam et labantes a feminis restitutas, constantia precum," et seq. Conf. Cæs. B. G. i. 51. (Plutarch. Marius, 18, 19.)

[3] *Suetonii Octav.* c. 23. "Graves ignominias cladesque duas omnino *nec alibi quam in Germania* accepit Lollianam et Varianam." *Tac. Annal.* ii. 21.: "Nec minor Germanis animus,

in the streets of Rome, they remained unconquered on the Rhine.[1] The tide of German life which set towards the East, was one of which no imperial command from Rome could stay the impetuous course. When African, Parthian, Greek and Gaul had bent the neck and borne the chain, the Germans alone kept up a doubtful struggle[2] with the universal conquerors, and laughed at their pompous threats and empty triumphs.[3]

And if Rome maintained for a time a nominal empire over her barbarian foes, it was by that

sed genere pugnæ et armorum superabantur." Cæsar was not considered impartial even by Asinius Pollio. Vide *Sueton. Julius Cæsar*, c. 56.: "Quum Cæsar pleraque et quæ per alios erant gesta temere crediderit, et quæ per se vel consulto vel etiam memoria lapsus perperam ediderit." *Cicero, pro Lege Manil.*: "Sinite hoc loco Quirites (sicut Poetæ solent qui res Romanas scribunt) præterire me nostram calamitatem."

[1] *Florus*, iv. 12.: "Victi magis quam domiti." *Tac. Germ.* xxxvii.: "Triumphati magis quam victi" (i. e. by Caligula, Claudius, Vitellius and Domitian). *Florus*, iv. 12.: "Hac (Variana) clade factum, ut imperium quod in litore Oceani non steterat in ripa Rheni fluminis staret."

[2] *Tac. Germ.* xxxvii.: "Tamdiu Germania *vincitur*. . . . . Non Samnis, non Pœni, non Hispaniæ Galliæve; ne Parthi quidem sæpius admonuere: quippe regno Arsacis acrior est Germanorum libertas." *Claudian. de IV. Cons. Honor.* 455, 456.:

> "Nobilitant veteres Germanica fœdera Drusos;
> Marte sed ancipiti, sed multis cladibus emta."

[3] *Tac. Germ.* xxxvii.: "Mox ingentes C. Cæsaris minæ in ludibrium versæ." Conf. Suetonius, C. Cæs. Caligula, c. 43, 44. *C. Plinii Secundi Panegyr.* c. xvi. (Epist. Libri x. et Pan. ed. Gesner. Lips. 1805): "Accipiet ergo aliquando Capitolium non *mimicos currus*, nec *falsæ* simulacra victoriæ," et seq.

"counsel" (*consilium*)[1] which in others she called "perfidy;" by cunningly dividing the strength she could not break; by leading German mercenaries against German freemen.[2] It was to his German soldiers that the first Cæsar owed the victory of Pharsalia; and the throne of his successors, for many generations, was propped by the Goth and Frank, who, when it fell, divided the accumulated spoils of an enslaved and plundered world. In somewhat more than three hundred years after the conquest of Gaul by the Franks, the power of the Roman Emperors of the West, and even the very titles of Cæsar and Augustus, devolved upon a German head, and in the person of Charlemagne the Germans were recognised as the successors of the Italians in the Western Roman Empire. To the great Frankish heroes therefore is attached an interest irrespective of their many great deeds and noble qualities. They illustrate to our minds the progress of a new and mighty race; their reign is a bright page in its annals, to which many a brighter has succeeded, and will yet succeed.

For many obvious reasons, and among others from the circumstance that the French preceded the Germans in the field of literature, it has happened that the great leaders and monarchs of the Frankish nation

[1] *Tac. Annal.* ii. 26.: "Plura *consilio* quam vi perfecisse" (i. e. Tiberium). Conf. i. 49, 50, 51. Cæs. B. Gall. iv. 13, 14. Dio Cassius, lv. 6.

[2] *Tac. Ann.* i. 24.: "Additur magna pars prætoriani equitis et robora Germanorum qui tum custodes Imperatori aderant."

have been far more closely connected with modern France than is warranted by historical truth. It will be observed that in the following pages we everywhere speak of the Franks exclusively as Germans, as one of the many offshoots of the mighty Teutonic race, which for more than a thousand years has been steadily advancing towards universal dominion over the political, social and moral world.

It has been said with some humour (perhaps the French have reason to say with *ill humour*), that of the two great French Emperors, who reigned at an interval of a thousand years, the one was a German and the other an Italian. The latter part of this assertion is true only in the least important sense, for, in all essential characteristics, Napoleon Bonaparte was pre-eminently French; but we could only controvert the former by reviving a theory respecting the origin of the Frankish tribe, which is entirely destitute of historical or ethnographical foundation.[1] Charlemagne was thoroughly German, in the mould of his body, in the cast of his mind, in his language, habits, tastes and sympathies; and the fact of his having ruled over the Romanised Celts of Neustria, as well as over his own Austrasian coun-

[1] A few French writers have ascribed a Gallic origin to the Franks. Among these are Audigier and Père Lacarry. Vide Bouquet, vol. ii. p. 25. of Preface, where we are informed that the Jesuit, de Tournemine, in his "Réflexions sur la dissertation de M. Liebnitz," maintains that the Franks were descended from the Volsci Tectosages, who, according to Cæsar (B. G. vi. 24.), settled in Germany near the Hercynian forest.

trymen, can never justify us in regarding him as a Frenchman.

It would be unsatisfactory to write, and less profitable to read, a history of the Frankish people without some account of the race to which they belong.

But little need be said of the physical characteristics of the ancient Germans: the immense size and rude beauty of their persons, — their fair complexions, fierce blue eyes [1], and flaxen hair [2], — their loud harsh

[1] *Tac. Germ.* c. iv.: "Truces et cærulei oculi, rutilæ comæ, magna corpora." Conf. xxx. and Tac. Agric. Vit. c. xi. *Tac. Ann.* ii. 21.: "Latos barbarorum artus." *Tac. Hist.* ii. 74.: "Truces corpore, horridi sermone." *Diodorus*, v. 31. (ed. Dindorf. Paris, 1842): Αὐτοὶ δ' εἰσὶ τὴν πρόσοψιν καταπληκτικοὶ καὶ ταῖς φωναῖς βαρυηχεῖς καὶ παντελῶς τραχύφωνοι. The flaming eyes of the ancient Germans are often referred to. *Ammian. Marcellin.* (xvi. p. 87. Hamburg, 1609), where he describes the defeat of the Alemanni by Julian, says: "Eorumque ultra solitum sævientium comæ fluentes horrebant, et *elucebat quidam furor ex oculis.*"

[2] The rutilæ comæ, of which Tacitus and other writers speak, seem to refer to the practice of dying the hair, in which they were imitated by the Roman ladies, and more particularly by that class among them which has in all ages been most solicitous about personal appearance. Conf. Cæs. B. G. i. 39. "Summa diligentia capillos cinere rutilabant" (i. e. Romanæ matronæ). — *Valerius Max.* ii. 1. 5. *Servius, in IV. Virgilii*, 698., says: "Matronis nigram comam meretricibus flavam probatam fuisse." Conf. Ovid ad Puellam, Am. i. 14. 45. Vide *Suetonius, Caligula*, 47.: "Coegitque non tantum *rutilare* et submittere comam, sed et sermonem Germanicum addiscere." Conf. *Seneca, de Ira*, iii. 26.: "Nec rufus crinis et coactus in nodum apud Germanos virum dedecet." Tertullian (*de Cultu*, ii. 6.) draws a frightful omen for the future fate of the Germans (or rather of their imitators), from their flaming hair! — "Video quasdam capillam croco vertere;

voices, calculated to strike terror into their foes, are celebrated by some of the greatest writers of antiquity, and we find most of these peculiarities in their descendants at the present day.

The dressing of the hair was an object of great care and attention among all the German tribes, and the mode of wearing it was made in some instances the distinguishing mark of a particular class. Among the Suevi, the nobles and the freemen wore it long, and gathered it in a knot upon the top of the head; the serfs of the same nation were denied this privilege.[1] "Their chiefs," says Tacitus, "have a more ornamental way of wearing the hair" than the simple freemen. It is probable that the same custom prevailed amongst the Franks, in whose laws, as well as in those of the Saxons, the hair was protected by a heavy fine. The long and

pudet eas etiam nationis suæ, quod non Germanæ aut Gallæ sint procreatæ; ita patriam capillo transferunt. *Male ac pessime sibi auspicantur flammeo capite.*" *Tac. Hist.* iv. 61.: "Propexum rutilatumque crinem." Tac. Germ. 31. Conf. *Martialis, ap. Cluver.* i. p. 131.:

"Crinibus in nodum torti venere Sicambri."

[1] *Tac. Germ.* 38.: "Apud Suevos usque ad canitiem, horrentem capillum retro sequuntur, ac sæpe in solo vertice religant." The Greeks and Romans made an important ceremony of cutting the hair of young people for the first time. Nero is said to have offered the first-fruits of his head to Jupiter Capitolinus; but it was more usual to dedicate them to Æsculapius, Hercules, and Apollo. *Juvenal, Sat.* iii. 186.: "Ille metit barbam, crinem hic deponit amati."

flowing locks of the Merovingian Kings were the distinguishing mark of their royal race and dignity.[1]

The dress of the ancient Germans is described as having been particularly simple, nor had they the fondness for gaudy ornaments common to barbarous nations. The general characteristic of their costume was its being close and tight fitting, thus differing from the loose and flowing robes of the Sarmatian tribes.[2] "The dress of all," says Tacitus, "is a short cloak, which they fasten with a clasp, or, if that is wanting, with a thorn; but they also pass whole days on the hearth and before the fire without any covering at all. The dress of the women is the same, except that they often wear linen garments with a purple border, but without sleeves, so as to leave the arms and even the upper part of the bosom exposed to view."[3]

As might be expected in the rude dwellers of a country "rough with forests and disfigured by marshes," their mode of life was simple in the

[1] *Gregor. Turonen.* vi. 24. (ap. Bouquet, tom. ii.), when speaking of Gundobald, son of Clotaire, King of the Franks, says: "Diligenti cura nutritus, ut regum istorum, mos est crinium flagellis per terga demissis." *Prolog. Leg. Sal.*: "Chlodoveus *comatus* et pulcher et inclytus." Lex Saxon. cap. vii. Vide Grimm, Deutsche Rechtsalterthümer.

[2] *Cæs. B. G.* vi. 21.: "Pellibus aut parvis rhenonum tegumentis utuntur magna corporis parte nuda." *Tac. Germ.* c. xvii.: "Locupletissimi veste distinguuntur non fluitante, sicut Sarmatæ ac Parthi, sed stricta et singulos artus exprimente."

[3] Tac. Germ. c. xxvii.

extreme. With "the world before them where to choose," and as yet in blissful ignorance of the rights and cares of property [1], they threw up their rude huts of the roughest materials, wherever the fountain, the field, or the grove, attracted their attention and allured their choice.[2] Yet even here, as in almost all that they did, they were unconsciously faithful to the indelible instincts of their race. They lived apart, each man in his own fashion; they built no cities, nor even connected houses, but — with as great a love of seclusion and independence as their descendants, the Westphalian boors, and the English country gentlemen — every man surrounded his house with as much open space as possible. Your true German [3] has never been a gregarious animal; where association is necessary for the attainment of a worthy object, he will readily unite with others, whether, as in ancient times, to choose a leader or make a foray, or, as in the present day, to elect a Parliament or hunt a fox; but he is most completely in his natural element, when, in the solitude of his fields, or in the privacy of his house, he sees about him none but the objects of his family affection, or the dependent instruments of his unbending will.

[1] *Cæs. B. G.* vi. 22.: "Neque quisquam agri modum certum aut fines habet proprios."

[2] *Tac. Germ.* xvi.: "Colunt discreti ac diversi ut fons, ut campus, ut nemus placuit."

[3] We have used the word *German* in its widest sense, to denote the members of the great Teutonic race in all ages and countries.

Of the food of the ancient Germans, Tacitus has said but little, and there is but little to say. It consisted, like that of other barbarian nations, of wild fruits, freshly-slain game [1], and cheese. Pliny mentions butter also as a favourite luxury, used by the wealthy alone.[2] Temperance in drinking was *not* one of their virtues, and we need not be surprised that they had skill enough to make beer,—although it implies some slight attention to the much hated agriculture,—for what will not Germans do in the service of the Cerevisian Bacchus?[3] Those who lived nearest to the Rhine, drank wine, which was of course imported, since we know that it was not introduced into Germany until a much later period. The meal was preceded by a bath, in which, notwithstanding the rigour of their climate, they seem to have taken great delight; and every man had a separate seat and table to himself.[4]

A people so warlike, so independent of each other,

[1] *Tac. Germ.* xxiii.: "Agrestia poma *recens* fera" (not *high*, as the Romans had begun to eat their game. Horat. Sat. ii. 8. 6.). Conf. Cæs. B. G. vi. 22.

[2] *Plin. Hist. Nat.* tom. ii. lib. xxviii. cap. 35. (ed. Joh. Harduin. in usum Delphin. Paris. 1741): "E lacte fit et butyrum barbararum gentium lautissimus cibus, et qui divites a plebe discernat. Plurimum e bubulo et inde nomen, pinguissimum ex ovibus."

[3] *Tac. Germ.* xxiii.: "Potui humor ex hordeo aut frumento." Conf. *Plin.* xxii. 82.: "Ex iisdem fiunt et potus." Meiners (Grundriss der Gesch. der Menschheit, p. 106.), says: "Even the most savage and stupid of nations have found the means of fuddling and stupifying themselves for a time."

[4] Tac. Germ. xxii.

were little inclined to undergo the patient labours of the husbandman. It seemed to them slothful and cowardly to gain by the sweat of their brows what might more readily be acquired at the cost of blood.[1] Even their rulers and magistrates, though they provided that a sufficient quantity of corn should be raised by the common labour for the general use, seem rather to have discouraged the settled habits necessary for the successful tillage of the field; lest, as Cæsar conjectures, the people, enamoured of property and peace, should exchange the love and practice of war for the quiet pursuits of agriculture. War was their chief delight, and, next to it, its mimicry, the chase.[2] When not engaged in these, the bravest warriors, leaving the meaner cares of daily life to their women and their slaves, abandoned themselves to the sloth which vacuity of mind, the long sustained exertions of the hunting field, and the excesses of the precarious meal would naturally produce. These intervals of torpor were however, occasionally broken by drinking bouts of inordinate length, at which quarrels were frequent, and were carried on, as by their truest descendants, the English, with far more blows than words.[3] . They also sought relief from the

[1] *Cæs. Bell. Gall.* vi. 22.: "Agriculturæ non student." *Tac. Germ.* xiv.: "Nec arare terram aut expectare annum tam facile persuaseris, quam vocare hostes et vulnera mereri; pigrum quinimmo et iners videtur, sudore adquirere quod possis sanguine parare."

[2] Tac. Germ. xv. *Hist.* iv. 16.: "Germani *lœta* bello gens." Cæs. B. G. vi. 21.

[3] *Tac. Germ.* xxii.: "Crebræ ut inter vinolentos rixæ, raro

monotony of life in the still fiercer excitement of gambling; and often staked wife, and children, and liberty, dearer to them than either, upon a single throw.[1]

Such then were some of the characteristics as described to us by Cæsar, Tacitus, and others, with wonderful unanimity, of the people destined by Providence to change the manners and remodel the institutions of Europe, and make their influence felt in every corner of the world. And if these were all, we might perhaps, like Adelung and Gibbon, regard our common ancestors as only an ordinary race of savages, and place them, not perhaps *below*, as the former of these writers has done, but on a level with, North American Indians. But there are other qualities which honourably distinguish them from all other barbarous nations that have appeared upon the great theatre of the world, since the Greeks and Romans played out the part assigned them.

The bravery of the Germans is spoken of by ancient writers with great admiration, and is ascribed by some to a lively faith in the immortality of the soul[2];

conviciis, sæpius cæde et vulneribus transiguntur." This answers to the modern schoolboy's phrase, "Don't quarrel—FIGHT." Tac. Annal. xi. 16. Italicus gained popularity among the Cherusci by his qualities as a hard drinker.

[1] *Tac. Germ.* xxiv.: "Aleam (quod mirere) sobrii inter seria exercent, tanta lucrandi perdendive temeritate ut cum omnia defecerunt extremo ac novissimo jactu de libertate et de corpore contendant."

[2] *Diod. Sic.* v. 28.: . . παρ' οὐδὲν τιθέμενοι τὴν τοῦ βίου τελευτήν. Ἐνισχύει γὰρ παρ' αὐτοῖς ὁ Πυθαγόρου λόγος ὅτι τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν

but mere courage is common to almost all uncivilised nations, and often arises in savages from ignorance of the resources of a civilised enemy. When unattended by some higher quality, it can do but little for its possessor, even in the field of battle. The Romans, however, found, to their cost, that the Germans did not long remain savages in their mode of warfare.[1] It is evident from the Commentaries of Cæsar, that they were not destitute of military skill, and that he found in Ariovistus no contemptible opponent, even in point of generalship.[2] In the time of Tacitus they had learned and adopted such parts of the Roman tactics as were suited to their circumstances. The Catti in particular are described as having introduced a thorough military discipline among their troops,—as not only appointing leaders, but obeying them, "and, what was very rare and

ἀνθρώπων ἀθανάτους εἶναι συμβέβηκε, καὶ δι' ἐτῶν ὡρισμένων πάλιν βιοῦν εἰς ἕτερον σῶμα τῆς ψυχῆς εἰσδυομένης. Διὸ καὶ κατὰ τὰς ταφὰς τῶν τετελευτηκότων ἐνίους ἐπιστολὰς γεγραμμένας τοῖς οἰκείοις τετελευτηκόσιν ἐμβάλλειν εἰς τὴν πυράν ὡς τῶν τετελευτηκότων ἀναγνωσομένων ταύτας. *Seneca, de Ira*, i. 11.: "Germanis quid est animosius? quid ad incursum acrius? quid armorum cupidius?" *Tac. Germ.* vi.: "Scutum reliquisse præcipuum flagitium."

[1] Tac. Germ. xxx.

[2] Cæs. B. G. i. 40. 51. Conf. *Cæs. B. G.* v. 42. (Cæsar speaks with admiration of the manner in which the Nervii fortified their camp after the Roman manner): "Vallo pedum XI et fossa pedum XV hiberna cingunt. Hæc et superiorum annorum consuetudine a nostris cognoverant . . . . nam minus horis tribus millium decem in circuitu munitionem perfecerunt." *Tac. Germ.* XXX.: "Plus reponere in Duce quam in exercitu."

peculiar to Roman discipline, as laying greater weight upon the general than upon the army."

Still more remarkable, as among barbarians, was their chastity [1]; their respect for the female sex; and that fidelity to one wife which is the foundation of all that is best in European civilisation. The existence of this virtue among the Germans is too well attested by history to admit of any doubt. Yet the

[1] *Tac. Germ.* xviii.: "Severa illic matrimonia nec ullam partem morum partem magis laudaveris. *Nam prope soli barbarorum singulis uxoribus contenti sunt.*" *Cæs. B. G.* vi. 21.: "Qui diutissime impuberes permanserunt maximam inter suos ferunt laudem." *Tac. Germ.* xix.: "Paucissima in tam numerosa gente adulteria . . . . nemo illic vitia ridet." Conf. Bonifacii Epist. XIX. ad Ethelbald. Anglorum Regem. *Tac. Germ.* viii.: "Inesse quinetiam (in feminis) sanctum aliquid et providum putant." *Salvian. de Gubernatione Dei*, vii. 222. (ed. Conrad. Rittershus. Altorf. 1620): "Plus adhuc dico, offenduntur Barbari ipsi impuritatibus nostris. . . . Impudicitiam nos diligimus Gothi exsecrantur. Puritatem nos fugimus illi amant. Fornicatio apud illos crimen atque discrimen est, apud nos decus." *Quinctilian, pro Milite Decl.* iii. 16. (ed. Burman. Ludg. Batav. 1720): "Nil tale (meretricium) novere Germani, et sanctius vivitur ad Oceanum." The captive wives of the Teutones begged Marius to give them to the vestal virgins, that they might preserve their chastity, and killed themselves in the night because their prayer was not granted. *Valer. Max. Fact. et Dict. Memorab.* lib. vi. c. 1. ext. sec. 3.: "Teutonorum vero conjuges Marium victorem orarunt ut ab eo virginibus Vestalibus dono mitterentur, adfirmantes *æque se atque illas virilis concubitus expertes futuras*, eaque re non impetrata laqueis sibi nocte proxima spiritum eripuerunt. Dii melius, quod hunc animum viris earum in acie non dederunt. Nam si mulierum suarum virtutem imitari voluissent, incerta Teutonicæ victoriæ tropæa reddidissent."

historian Gibbon, who had evidently no great admiration for the continence imputed to them, endeavours to explain the phenomenon in a manner which not only takes away a great portion of its merit, but makes chastity inseparable from a state of barbarism, —a position which cannot be maintained. "Heroines of such a cast," he says, — after speaking of the readiness of the "unpolished wives" of Germany to die for their husbands or the preservation of their own honour, — "may claim our admiration, but they were assuredly neither very lovely nor very susceptible of love."[1] Their chastity was rather, he appears to think, the result of want of attraction in the woman, than of modesty or virtue on either side; and what he says further on the subject might almost be considered as a *defence* of the Germans from the imputation of being more chaste than any other race would have been under the same circumstances. We, however, may be allowed to attribute their superior purity to the fact that these barbarians respected their women, as the partners of their labours and their dangers[2], and viewed them in a higher light than as the mere plaything of the passions. The high position accorded to the woman by the man, in the German races, has raised the love of the sexes from the indiscriminate sensuality of the Greeks and Romans to the chivalrous constancy

[1] Gibbon, Dec. and Fall, ch. ix.

[2] *Tac. Germ.* xviii.: "Laborum periculorumque sociam."

of the middle ages, to which we owe the idea of home with all its noble and tender associations.

Chastity in the women had its counterpart of honour in the men. The freeman has few temptations to deceive, and the brave man scorns to humble himself before another by a lie. They kept their word, even when they had staked their liberty upon the cast of the die and lost. "This," says Tacitus, "is obstinate perseverance in an evil purpose; *they themselves call it honour.*" [1] The very fact of their giving it this name is a proof that they were acting on principle, and from noble motives.

The existence of the high qualities here ascribed to the Germans has been recognised in every age. The poet Lucan calls liberty emphatically "a German blessing." [2] We owe, says M. Guizot, "to the Germans, the energetic sentiment of individual liberty, of *human individuality.*" [3] The spirit of the free-

[1] *Tac. Germ.* xxiv.: "Ea est in re prava pervicacia; *ipsi fidem vocant.*"

[2] *Lucan. Pharsalia,* vii. 433.:

"Libertas ultra Tigrim Rhenumque recessit
Ac toties nobis jugulo quæsita, negatur
Germanum Scythicumque bonum."

[3] *Guizot, Histoire de la Civilisat.* (ed. Pichon et Didier. Paris, 1829), vol. i. pp. 287, 288.: "Ce que les Germains ont surtout apporté dans le monde romain, c'est l'esprit de liberté individuelle le besoin, la passion de l'indépendance, de l'individualité. . . . Les Germains nous ont donné l'esprit de liberté, de la liberté telle que nous la concevons et la connaissons aujourd'hui, comme le droit et le bien de chaque individu, maître de lui-même et de ses actions, et de son sort, tant qu'il ne nuit à aucune autre."

dom which they have bequeathed to their descendants differs much in its nature from that of the ancient world. The liberty of the Greek and Roman was political; its aim was to make itself felt in public; while that of the German is to be individually undisturbed from without. The latter rests on a broader and firmer foundation than the former; it is not always crushed even by the fall of political freedom; it has a temple in every heart, and a castle in every house; and these must be separately overthrown before it can be utterly destroyed.

It is evident, however, that where this sentiment of individual freedom predominates — where men do not move gregariously — political science, the object of which is to produce a well ordered and powerful state, becomes exceedingly complicated and difficult. In Sparta, and in a less degree in Athens and Rome, the citizen was content to be a slave, that his country might be free. The grand problem proposed to the Germans was to reconcile the greatest possible individual freedom with order, discipline and unity of action. When we come, in another part of this work, to consider the manner in which they endeavoured to solve this important question, we shall see reason to ascribe to the barbarians of the North a political insight and a practical wisdom which will in vain be sought for among the nations of antiquity. The people to whom a monarch of our own times a few years since emphatically ascribed "an hereditary wisdom without parallel," do, in fact, owe much of that wisdom to the traditions of their barbarian fore-

fathers. "If," says Montesquieu, "you will read the admirable work of Tacitus on the manners of the Germans, you will see that it is from them that the English have derived the idea of their political government; this beautiful system was invented in the forests."[1]

There is scarcely a subject in the whole range of history of which it is more difficult to gain a clear and satisfactory view than the religion of the ancient Germans. When we look for information on this point, as we naturally do, to the accounts of the Roman historians, we find them not only meagre but improbable, and singularly inconsistent with each other. We learn, too, to receive with the utmost caution all that the Romans say about the religion of other countries, from the perception of their strong tendency to identify the deities of the nations which they conquered with the gods of Rome, and to furnish them with Latin names and rites, to fit them for their own Pantheon. From Cæsar, in whom we should gladly place some confidence,—though we must not forget that he saw the Germans chiefly away from their own haunts, and in a state of war,—we have the remarkable assurance that they had no priests and offered no sacrifices. "They worshipped," he says, "only those of the Gods whose forms they could *see*, and whose beneficial influence they felt, as the sun, the

[1] *Esprit des Lois*, xi. 6.: "Si l'on veut lire l'admirable ouvrage de Tacite, sur les mœurs des Germains, on verra que c'est d'eux que les Anglois ont tiré l'idée de leur Gouvernement politique. Ce beau système a été trouvé dans les bois."

moon, and the element of fire: of the rest they have never even heard."[1]

When we turn to Tacitus, who, as might be expected from the subject of one of his works, speaks more at large, we are offended at the outset by finding our old acquaintances from Olympus brought forward as denizens of the primeval German forests; and are almost tempted to believe that the historian has been careless enough to mention the deities whom a few Latinised tribes of Germany had adopted from the Romans, as the original tutelary gods of the whole Teutonic race.

Their chief god, he tells us, was Mercury, to whom they offered *human* sacrifices. They also worshipped Hercules and Mars, and sacrificed the customary animals to them. Some of the Suevi he represents as worshipping Isis, under the form of a light pinnace, which denotes, he thinks, that this *cultus* was imported.[2] They sang, too, of Hercules, "the chief of all brave men, as they rushed into battle."[3] He speaks of twin gods under the name of *Alci*, as being worshipped in a forest in the country of the Naharvali, and compares them to Castor and Pollux.[4]

How little weight is due to this decided mention of Roman gods, whom Tacitus would hardly recognise otherwise than in their statues, may be judged from the words which immediately follow in the ninth

[1] Cæs. Bell. Gall. vi. 21.
[2] Tac. Germ. ix.
[3] Ibid. iii.
[4] Ibid. xliii.

chapter, quoted above. "But they do not," he continues, "think it consistent with the greatness of the gods to fashion them in the likeness of any human form."

Thus far we learn little or nothing from Tacitus, who is least to be depended on where he speaks with the greatest decision and gives the *names* of gods. In other parts of his works, where he merely relates in general terms what he observed or heard, and finds no opportunity to indulge in the favourite assimilating process of the Romans, he is more instructive, and more reconcileable with what we know from other sources. We are able, therefore, to introduce his other notices in their proper connection.

What has been said of the vague and scanty nature of our knowledge of the subject before us may surprise those who are acquainted with the contents, or even with the existence, of the voluminous works of modern scholars on the subject of German mythology. Yet he will be more fortunate than the author of these pages, who (after studying the work of Jacob Grimm [1], and watching the efforts of this great literary Demiurgus to bring order out of the chaos of popular traditions and poetic fictions—of wild and barbarous cosmogonies, and still wilder philosophical interpretations thereof—of intermingled shreds and fragments of creeds of different ages, localities, and tribes—and all the embodied fancies of the frenzied, dithyrambic imagination of the savage North) does not turn with

[1] Deutsche Mythologie.

a feeling of relief to the few names and facts — few, but full of character and meaning — in which Roman history and German tradition coincide.

The principal writers on this subject are at variance with each other, as to the existence or non-existence of a *German* Mythology in the narrower sense, as distinguished from the Scandinavian, and the legends of the Eddas and the Scalda. Köppen[1] says that of the German gods little remains but the names. And Simrock[2], regarding the Scandinavians and Germans as members of the same family, attributes to them essential identity of belief and worship. In his work, therefore, we are launched into the great sea of Scandinavian fable, with its Ymir, its Baldur, its Loki, and Audhumbla, the celestial cow.

Jacob Grimm, on the other hand, attempts to construct a specifically *German* mythology, a task in which, though he displays his usual stupendous learning and admirable ingenuity, he can scarcely be called successful, since he could do little more than arrange the crumbling fragments of a forgotten system on the Scandinavian model.

We cannot in this place discuss the theories of these ingenious writers, whose works, moreover, are very widely known. It will suffice for our present purpose to give such a general account of German heathenism as we think consistent with history and tradition, and confirmed by strong traces in the

[1] Nordische Mythologie.

[2] Handbuch der Deutschen Mytholog. mit Einschluss der Nordischen.

superstitions, songs, and legends, and even in the language itself, of all the Germanic peoples.

The religion of the ancient Germans had its origin and its home in external nature. They raised their rude altars amid the awful gloom of primeval forests, on the summits of lofty hills, by the sides of rivers, and on the shores of secluded lakes. "*They consecrate woods and groves and call by the names of gods that secret something which they see by reverence alone.*"[1] There is a simplicity and grandeur about their religious faith which well accords with their national character and with the rude free life they led in the bosom of uncultivated nature. Their ideas of Deity may be wild and grotesque, like the sounds and shapes by which they were surrounded; their rites may be barbarous and cruel, for a nation of warriors and huntsmen thought little of slaying or being slain; but they are at all events free from the fetish littleness and meanness which often characterise the religion of barbarians.

There is evidence to show that they had some idea of one omnipotent, omniscient and presiding God (Allfadir), of whose worship the Semnones[2], a tribe of the Suevi, claimed for their territory the honour of being the original seat. "All the tribes of the same race" (i.e. the Suevic), which, as Tacitus says, occupied the greater part of Germany, "meet together at stated periods by deputations, in a forest hallowed by the auguries of successive generations,

[1] Tac. Germ. ix.

[2] Between the Elbe and the Oder (Brandenburg).

and by the awe-inspiring antiquity of the place. They commence their barbarous rites by the sacrifice of a human being. . . . . No one dares to enter the sacred wood until he has been bound with a chain in token of humility, and of a deep sense of the presence and power of the god." If the worshipper thus encumbered "should happen to fall, it is not lawful for him to be lifted up or to rise, but he must roll out of the wood on the ground. This spot is regarded by all as the centre of their religion, and, as it were, the source of their nation, the dwelling-place of the supreme God, the ruler of all things, to whom all other deities are subject and subservient." [1]

Of the gods whose names have come down to us, and have left traces in our own as well as other German languages, the principal was Wuotan (Wodan, Odhinn), who sometimes appears as the Supreme Ruler of gods and men, and at others as only one of a trinity or larger co-fraternity. This was in all probability the deity whom Tacitus calls *Mercurius*[2], whom, he says "the Germans principally worship."[3] From Wuotan all blessings were supposed to flow; but especially the chief of all blessings to a warlike people —victory over their enemies.

With Wuotan the name of the goddess Freia is usually associated as his wife.[4] Freia also appears in

[1] Tac. Germ. xxxix.

[2] *Paull. Diac. de Gest. Langobard.* i. 9.: "Wodan sane, quem adjecta litera Godan dixerunt, ipse est, qui apud Romanos Mecurius dicitur."

[3] Tac. Germ. ix.

[4] Paull. Diac. de Gest. Langobard. i. 8.

the Edda in the character of the Teutonic Aphrodite, the goddess of love and spring.

The next most prominent name is that of Donar (Thörr, Thor), the god of thunder, and of the weather in general; and of the produce of the field in so far as it is affected by atmospheric influences.

Zio (Tyr) appears to have been their more especial god of war (the Mars of Tacitus), who, as they believed, was present at their battles and aided the efforts of his warriors.[1]

Of their goddesses, Tacitus mentions Nerthus (or, as some read, Hertha), "Mother Earth,"[2] who was worshipped in the country now called Mecklenburg and Pomerania, and whose usual abode was the Island of Rügen.[3] At certain times, probably once in the year, the goddess was borne in a chariot yoked with cows in solemn procession through the country. This consecrated vehicle, which only one priest was allowed to approach, was usually concealed beneath a covering in the umbrageous recesses of the sacred grove, in which Nerthus herself resided. During her progress through the favoured land, a state of things like the medieval "truce of God" prevailed. Every day was a holiday, and every place which she approached became the festive scene of hospitality and joy. The pleased inhabitants engaged in no wars and carried no arms; every weapon was carefully shut

[1] *Tac. Germ.* vii.: "Deo, quem adesse bellantibus credunt."

[2] *Ibid.* xl.: "Nerthum (Hertham), id est terram matrem."

[3] Alsen, Zealand, and Oesel have put in a rival claim to the goddess!

up. Then, and then only, were peace and quiet known and loved, until the same priest restored the goddess, sated with the society of men, to her sanctuary in the holy island. Immediately on her return "the chariot, the vestments, and, strange to say, the goddess herself were bathed in the secret lake. Slaves attended her on this occasion, whom the same lake forthwith swallowed up; and hence the mysterious awe of the worshippers, and their holy ignorance of the nature of the being, whom only men about to die might see." [1]

Of a somewhat secondary class was Tuisco, "the earthborn god," [2] from whom the Germans derived life and name. His son Mannus was the first of human beings, and father of Ingo, Isco, and Irmino, the progenitors of the three great tribes into which the German race was divided, the Ingaevones, Iscaevones, and the Hermiones.

The traditions and legends of the early Germans also manifest a belief in an inferior class of supernatural beings, or Dæmons, both bad and good. Among these the Giants, if we may judge from analogy with the Scandinavian Mythology, played a terribly conspicuous part, as rivals and enemies of the gods. Dwarfs, too, and Elves, and Cobolds or Goblins, were objects of serious and universal

[1] Tacitus (*Ann.* i. 51.) also mentions a German goddess *Tanfana*, whose "temple" Germanicus destroyed in the country of the Marsi (Westphalia): "Celeberrimum illis gentibus templum quod Tanfanæ vocabant solo æquantur."

[2] *Tac. Germ.* ii.: "Tuisconem Deum terra editum."

faith,—a faith which still, to a certain degree, maintains itself in the cottages and nurseries of modern times.

It is a very peculiar characteristic of German heathenism that women occupied so lofty a position in its service. The power of prophecy was supposed to reside chiefly in the female sex[1], and in some individuals—the "Wise Women" or Alrunæ—to such a degree, that whole tribes regarded their responses with as much respect as the oracles of a god. One of these prophetesses, Veleda, a virgin of the Bructerans, who had rightly foretold the victory of her countrymen over the Roman legions, was treated with more than royal honours, and her favour was sought by powerful leaders at the head of armies. The ambassadors sent by the people of Cologne to consult her were not admitted to her presence. Seated in a lofty tower, she delivered her responses to a chosen kinsman, who was received by the expectant and awe-struck envoys like a messenger from heaven. Veleda was afterwards taken prisoner, and appears to have graced a triumph in the streets of Rome.[2]

[1] *Tac. Germ.* viii.: "Inesse quinetiam sanctum aliquid et providam (feminis) putant; nec aut consilia earum adspernantur, aut responsa negligunt." Conf. *Plut. de Virtut. Mulierum*, p. 246.: Ἐκ τούτου διετέλουν περί τε πολέμου καὶ εἰρήνης βουλευόμενοι μετὰ τῶν γυναικῶν. Jornand. de Rebus Goth. c. 24. The *modern* Germans are not all so polite as their ancestors. Lipsius, in a note on the passage of Tacitus quoted, remarks: "Hocne supererat? *heu ipsos parum firma mente qui eam quæsivere apud amentem sexum!*" Tac. Germ. ix. Tac. Hist. iv. 61. 65., v. 22.

[2] *Statius Silv.* i. 4. 90.: "Captivæque preces Veledæ."

Mention is made of her successor Gauna, — who flourished in the reign of Domitian, — of Aurinia, and others. Though the above-mentioned prophetesses appear to have been "virgins," the prophetic power was not considered to be confined to the German *maidens*, as is clear from a passage in Cæsar, in which he says that Ariovistus, on one occasion, declined battle, because the "*matresfamiliæ*" had declared from the omens that the Germans could not be victorious if they fought before the new moon.[1] The Alrunæ took their auguries from the entrails of sacrificial beasts, the blood of slaughtered captives, and the sounds and phenomena of nature — as the noise of the breaking waves, the changes of the moon, &c.

We know even less of the modes of German worship than of the gods themselves. It consisted of sacrifice and, no doubt, of prayer. The victims were partly human — prisoners taken in war, purchased slaves, and criminals — and partly what Tacitus calls *concessa animalia* (*allowable* animals), by which he means those which were sacrificed by civilised nations. The horrible practice of sacrificing *men* was not entirely discontinued among the Franks, even after their nominal conversion to Christianity[2]; and the Danes and Normans retained the custom down to the time of the emperor Henry the Fowler. It is generally held that human victims were only offered to Wuotan (Odhinn,

[1] Cæs. B. Gall. i. 50.

[2] Procop. de Bell. Goth. ii. 25.

or Mercury.)[1] To the other gods they sacrificed all the usual beasts, but more particularly horses; and it would appear that to each god some one animal was dedicated as his appropriate offering. Images of these animals were kept in the consecrated groves, and borne as standards in war[2]; a custom from which some derive the armorial bearings of distinguished chiefs. With regard to their prayers, Grimm conjectures that they were offered with bowed and uncovered head, upturned eye, clasped hands and bended knee; but nothing is really known on this subject. Some writers follow Cæsar in thinking that the Germans had no priests; a singular opinion in the face of so much evidence to the contrary. Tacitus tells us that the priests alone had the right of binding and flogging in the German armies; and that they did it, not as it were by order of the general, but at the command of the god who was present in the camp.[3] In the general legislative assembly of the people, also, the priests commanded silence, preserved order, and had the exclusive right of controlling that fierce and armed democracy, who would listen to nothing less than the command of God in the voice of his ministers.[4] It is true, however, that there was no

[1] But Jornand. (*de Reb. Goth.*) says of the Goths: "Victimæ ejus (Martis) mortes fuere captorum."

[2] *Tac. Germ.* vii.: "Effigiesque et signa quædam, detracta lucis, in prœlium ferunt." *Tac. Hist.* iv. 22.: "Inde depromptae silvis lucisve ferarum imagines ut cuique genti prœlium inire mos est."

[3] Tac. Germ. vii.

[4] Ibid. xi.

priestly *caste*, and that every *paterfamiliæ*[1] could perform religious offices for his own family.

The Germans took their auguries from the flight and song of birds; from the issue of a single combat between one of their own warriors and a captive enemy,—each being armed with his national weapons[2]—and from the cadence of the Barditus (Barritus), or war-chaunt.[3] The Roman historian also describes a method in use among them of taking omens from lots. Having severed a branch from a fruit-bearing tree, they cut it up into small pieces, and, after inscribing certain marks or *runes* on each cutting, they scattered them promiscuously over a white cloth. Then, if the omen were sought respecting a public matter, the state priest—if in a private affair, the *paterfamiliæ*—supplicated the aid of the gods with upturned eyes, and, having raised each cutting three times, interpreted the will of heaven from the inscriptions.[4]

But there were no auspices in which they placed such implicit faith as those derived from the neighing of horses. *White* horses were maintained at the public expense in the very sacred forest abodes of the gods themselves. Unpolluted by the contact of human labour, these animals were kept exclusively for religious purposes; and when they drew the chariot of a god, the chief priest or the ruler of the state accompanied them, and carefully observed the sounds they uttered.[5] The highest importance was attached to these indica-

[1] Tac. Germ. x. [2] Ibid. x. [3] Ibid. iii.
[4] Ibid. xi. [5] Ibid. x.

tions of the divine will by all classes of the people. Even the priests considered that they themselves were but the ministers, while the horses were the confidants of the gods.[1] The Roman historian erroneously considers that this kind of divination was peculiar to the German races.[2]

The notions of the ancient Germans respecting a future state appear to have been somewhat analogous to those of the early Greeks. *Walhalla*, like the Elysian Fields, was only open to heroes,—to those who had fallen bravely on the field of battle with their wounds in front. These the goddess Freia with her attendant maidens selected from the bloody plain, and bore away to the heavenly abode of the mighty Wuotan, who came forth to welcome them in person. A banquet was prepared for their reception, and they feasted with the gods on the flesh of the divine Boar, and quaffed the celestial Goat's mead from ever-flowing goblets. The life in the future world was a continuation, on a sublimer scale, of the warrior's career on earth. Each morning they rode forth armed and in gorgeous array to some chosen battle-field, and, having felled each other to the ground till they were weary, returned with fresh delight to the banquets and the wine-cups of Walhalla.[3]

To those of our readers to whom the above account is unsatisfactory from its unavoidable brevity, we recommend the works of Jacob Grimm and Simrock;

[1] "Se enim ministros Deorum, *illos* (equos) conscios putant."
[2] Herodot. iii. 84, 85.
[3] Simrock's Handb. der Deutsch. Mythol.

where they will find the subject ably treated and thoroughly exhausted. And if there are some to whom what is here said seems more than is warranted by historical evidence, they may refresh themselves with the conciseness of the historian Luden[1], who says, when speaking on this subject: "The Germans believed in a Divine Providence ruling over all things, and before this power they bowed in humility and reverence. . . . . But they had no gods or priests, nor any external church. Whatever else has been said on this subject is error, fable, and misrepresentation!"

As the foregoing account has been drawn principally, though not exclusively, from the work of Tacitus, it will be necessary to say something of that work itself, and to refer briefly to the opinion of some modern writers, at variance with the views which we have endeavoured to set before the reader. It seems almost incredible that this admirable work, confirmed as it is in all its most important statements by the general voice of antiquity, and by innumerable facts which lie before us at the present day, should ever have been denied all historical value, and flippantly set aside as a clever fiction, written by the author in an "*accès d'humeur*," to satirise the vices of his countrymen.[2] There are indeed

[1] Gesch. der. Teutschen. i. p. 186.

[2] *Guizot, Hist. de la Civil.*, i. p. 258.: "Tacite a peint les Germains comme Montaigne et Rousseau les sauvages, dans un accès d'humeur contre sa patrie; son livre est une satire des mœurs romaines." Yet he allows that we may trust his *facts*. "Les faits sont exacts; . . . l'imagination de Tacite est essentiellement forte

few who maintain this extraordinary view of the "Germania" of Tacitus; yet some writers of note agree with M. Guizot in describing the ancient Germans as a race of savages, in no way superior to other barbarians at the same stage of their progress towards civilisation. Among these authors, we must reckon Gibbon and Adelung. The latter, in speaking of his forefathers, says: "In this state the barbarian approaches nearer to the rapacious beast than to the civilised man, ennobled by knowledge, manners, and taste." "Hence," he continues, a little farther on, "the absence of all the more refined emotions of love, gratitude, and benevolence, because the structure of his nerves can only be shaken by powerful masses." . . . . "Hence the oppression and subjugation of everything weaker than himself, and particularly of the woman, whom he degrades to a slave, and condemns to the meanest and most laborious offices.[1] In another passage, too long to quote entire, he ascribes to them the violent passions of an enraged

et vraie; . . . . jamais la vie barbare n'a été peinte avec plus de vigueur, plus de vérité poétique. . . . Rien ne le prouve mieux que les récits d'Ammien Marcellin. pur soldat, sans imagination, sans instruction, qui avait fait la guerre contre les Germains, et dont les descriptions simple et brèves, coïncident presque partout avec les vives et savantes couleurs de Tacite."

[1] Adelung's Aelteste Gesch. der Deutschen (Leipzig, 1806), p. 296, et seq. Did the civilised Athenians show any great respect for their women? As an antidote to the poisoned words of Adelung, vide *Pomp. Mela*, iii. 3.: "Tantum hospitibus boni, mitesque supplicibus." Conf. Cæs. B. G. vi. 23. Tac. Germ. xxi. *Lex Burgund.* tit. 38.: "Quicunque hospiti venienti tectum aut focum negaverit, trium solidorum inlatione multetur."

wild beast, and charges them with being addicted to cruelty, "tempered only by interested motives," "idleness," "hatred of control" "drunkenness," "theft," "rape," "falsehood," "treachery," and the darkest superstition. Their hospitality he accounts for by saying that "it *always* goes hand in hand with the love of drinking," and that "barbarians are always hospitable in proportion as they are rude and wild." Their "chastity" fares no better at his hands. "They could not," he says, "have many allurements to the contrary in their cold and humid climate." The continence, therefore, which "many writers praise in the Germans, was not virtue but nature." When the German punished adultery so severely, he did it, "not out of hatred to vice, but out of revenge for the attack on *his property*—his wife being the first among his serfs." He reluctantly allows that they were not cannibals, but declares that they "understood scalping perfectly!"[1]

Now, if the authorities for all this abuse — for we can call it nothing else — were as good, as they are utterly insufficient and worthless, would it be pos-

[1] *Adelung, Aelteste Gesch. der Deutsch.* p. 303.: "Dass sie das scalpiren so gut verstanden, als die Nord-Amerikanischen Wilden, erhellet noch aus mehrern Spuren selbst des mittlern Alters. Das *decalvare* im West-Gothischen Gesetze, das *capillos et cutem detrahere*, welches bey den Franken noch 879 üblich war, nach den Annal. Fuld. das Angel-Sächs *Hettinan*, *capillos cum ipsa capitis pelle detrahere*, das Haar mit Kloben auszuwinden der mittlern Zeiten, wovon die Haranscara der spätern Zeiten noch ein gelinder Ueberrest ist, war wohl nichts anders."

sible to point out, or even imagine, a more degraded race of savages? And will any one who has studied history assert that all barbarians are alike? or that, if there be any disparity among them, the ancient Germans are at the bottom of the scale? Is there, then, really no difference between one race and another in capacity for development, progress, and dominion? Were the early Greeks no better than the other barbarians of their time? Were the Germans of whom Tacitus writes, no better than the Sarmatians or the Huns?—and could every other race, under the same circumstances, have run the course which the Anglo-Saxons are now running? If Tacitus was misled by his imagination and enthusiasm to paint the Germans in too flattering colours, what was it that excited his fancy and secured his predilection in their favour? If it was barbarism that he loved, because it was farthest removed from the sickly refinements, the unnatural tastes, and monstrous vices of his age and country, why does he discriminate so carefully between different tribes of Germans? Why does he speak contemptuously of the equally barbarous Gauls, the Sarmatians, and the Fins?[1] So discriminating an admiration cannot be the result of unfounded partiality. Nor have we any good grounds for believing in any peculiar regard on his part towards his country's most formidable enemies. He was a genuine Roman, and little likely to hail with pleasure the new sun, which, as his acute and

[1] Tac. Germ. xlvi.

darkly foreboding mind foresaw, was about to rise over the ruins of the tottering Empire. We have before us a truly Roman expression of feelings forced from him by this presentiment, and breathing anything but partial fondness. "The nation of the Bructeri," he says, "was utterly destroyed by the co-operation of the neighbouring tribes, either out of hatred for their pride, or lust of booty, or by the favour of the gods towards us; for they did not grudge us even the spectacle of the combat. Above 60,000 of them fell, not by Roman arms, but, what is grander still, as a spectacle for our eyes. Long may there exist and endure among the nations, if not a love for us, at least a hatred for one another; since, amid the declining fates of the Empire, fortune can grant us no greater boon than the discord of our enemies!" [1]

There is nothing so extravagant, even in the passages most flattering to the national character of the Germans, as to lead us for one moment to suspect that Tacitus is not drawing from the life. The impression which he leaves upon our mind is, that they were an energetic and noble race of barbarians of whom much might be augured for the future; but still *barbarians* with many of the failings and vices natural to their state. And this is all we claim for them. We do not wish to fall into the morbid patriotism of a Luden, who is inclined to call in question the authenticity of the "Germania" because it

[1] Tac. Germ. xxxiii.

sometimes blames as well as praises his rude forefathers; and who actually disputes the truth of some actions recorded there, because they are inconsistent with his notions of the moral purity of the German mind![1] Such principles of criticism are simply ridiculous. All that we have endeavoured in this place to prove, — that the Germans possessed a pre-eminent capacity for development, progress, and dominion — might be gathered from other works of Tacitus (the historical value of which has never been disputed), even though the "Germania" had not been written. The attitude which the Germans assumed towards the Romans on their first meeting in Gaul, and in their subsequent intercourse, was never that of mere savages.[2] They did

[1] It is not a little amusing to compare the opinions of Adelung with those of Luden. The latter (Gesch. der Teutschen, i. p. 261.) endeavours to show that the story of the abduction of Segestes' daughter Thusnelda by Arminius must be false, because the heart of the hero was too full of patriotism to have room for love, and because such an act would offend the *moral* sense of the German nation and lessen his influence over them. Thusnelda, Luden thinks, would never have consented to bear children to be slaves in Rome.

[2] Read the interesting negotiations between Cæsar and Ariovistus, in the course of which the latter, when invited to a conference, replies (*Cæs. B. G.* i. 34, 35, 36.): "Si quid ipsi a Cæsare opus esset, sese ad eum venturum fuisse; *si quid ille se velit, illum ad se venire oportere.* . . . Sibi autem mirum videri, quid in sua Gallia, quam bello vicisset, aut Cæsari, aut omnino populo Romano negotii esset." And again (c. 36.): "Neminem secum sine sua pernicie contendisse. Quum vellet, congrederetur; intellecturum, *quid invicti Germani*, exercitatissimi in armis, qui inter annos quatuordecim tectum non subîssent, *virtute possent.*"

not, indeed, undervalue the Roman power; they knew that it was terrible, that it had hitherto been irresistible. They neither recklessly sought a collision with Cæsar, nor did they timidly shrink from it, when they thought their rights invaded, for they had a proud consciousness of what was in themselves. They were not overawed by the superiority which long ages of wealth and civilisation had conferred upon their opponents. They did not, as is the custom with mere savages, slink away before the face of those who came armed with the power of knowledge and adorned by the arts of life; nor did they seek to denationalise themselves by slavishly aping what they could not really acquire.[1] They looked their superiors boldly and calmly in the face; they kept up their pride in their own race and name, and considered the Ubii degraded by the adoption of the Roman dress and manners. They quickly learned from their enemies what it suited their purpose to

[1] Their pride in the German name is very remarkable. *Tac. Germ.* xxviii.: "Treveri et Nervii circa adfectationem Germanicæ originis ultro ambitiosi sunt, tanquam *per hanc gloriam sanguinis a similitudine et inertia Gallorum* separentur. . . Ne Ubii quidem . . . origine erubescunt." *Tac. Hist.* iv. 28.: "Actæ utrobique prædæ, infestius in Ubiis, quod gens *Germanicæ originis* ejurata patria, Romanorum nomen, *Agrippinenses* vocarentur." Compare the interesting passage in Tacitus (*Annal.* xiii. 54.), in which he relates that the Frisian ambassador, being in the theatre at Rome, asked who the strangers were who occupied the seats of the Senators: "postquam audiverant, 'earum gentium legatis id honoris datum, quæ virtute et amicitia Romana præcellerent,' *nullos mortalium armis aut fide ante Germanos esse exclamant*, degrediunturque et inter Patres considunt."

know. In the service of the Empire, they became the most skilful soldiers: they formed the bravest legions; they decided the fate of the most important battles; they furnished the ablest generals and statesmen, — men who, single-handed, sustained the imperial throne, yet in the very heart of the Emperor's palace never ceased to be Germans. And when at last they threw themselves upon the Roman Empire, with the determination to take possession of its fairest provinces, no difficulties and no disasters could deter them. Though often defeated, they were never conquered: a wave might roll back, but the tide advanced; they held firmly to their purpose till it was attained; they wrested the ball and sceptre from Roman hands, and have kept them until now.

CHAP. II.

FROM THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF THE FRANKS TO THE DEATH OF CLOVIS.

A.D. 240 to A.D. 511.

It is well known that the name of "Frank" is not to be found in the long list of German tribes preserved to us in the "Germania" of Tacitus. Little or nothing is heard of them before the reign of Gordian III. In A.D. 240 Aurelian, then a tribune of the sixth legion stationed on the Rhine, encountered a body of marauding Franks near Mayence, and drove them back into their marshes.[1] The word "Francia" is also found at a still earlier date, in the old Roman chart called the *Charta Peutingeria*, and occupies on the map the right bank of the Rhine from opposite Coblentz to the sea. The origin of the Franks has been the subject of frequent debate, to which French

[1] *Vopiscus, in Aurelian.* c. 7. (*Hist. Aug. Script.* Ludg. Batav. 1671, tom. ii. p. 433.): "Francos irruentes . . . . sic adflixit, ut trecentos ex his captos, septingentis interemptis sub corona vendiderit. Unde iterum de eo facta est cantilena: 'Mille Francos, mille Sarmatas semel occidimus.'" The Franks on this occasion, which was thought by the Romans important enough to be celebrated by a song, lost about 1000 men killed or taken prisoners!

patriotism has occasionally lent some asperity. At the time when they first appear in history, the Romans had neither the taste nor the means for historical research, and we are therefore obliged to depend in a great measure upon conjecture and combination. It has been disputed whether the word "Frank" was the original designation of a tribe, which by a change of habitation emerged at the period above mentioned into the light of history, or that of a new league, formed for some common object of aggression or defence, by nations hitherto familiar to us under other names.

We can in this place do little more than refer to a controversy, the value and interest of which has been rendered obsolete by the progress of historical investigation. The darkness and void of history have as usual been filled with spectral theories, which vanish at the challenge of criticism and before the gradually increasing light of knowledge.

We need hardly say that the origin of the Franks has been traced to fugitive colonists from Troy; for what nation under Heaven has *not* sought to connect itself, in some way or other, with the glorified heroes of the immortal song? [1] Nor is it surprising that French writers, desirous of transferring from the Germans to themselves the honours of the Frankish name, should have made of them a tribe of

[1] *Domus Carol. Geneal. Monumenta Germanica* (ed. Pertz), tom. ii. p. 310.: "Priamus et Antenor egressi a Troja venerunt in Secambria, et inde in Pannonia, et inde in Meotides paludes, et inde juxta ripas fluminis Reni in extrema parte Germaniæ."

Gauls, whom some unknown cause had induced to settle in Germany, and who afterwards sought to recover their ancient country from the Roman conquerors.[1] At the present day, however, historians of every nation, including the French, are unanimous in considering the Franks as a powerful confederacy of German tribes, who in the time of Tacitus inhabited the north-western parts of Germany bordering on the Rhine. And this theory is so well supported by many scattered notices, slight in themselves, but powerful when combined, that we can only wonder that it should ever have been called in question. Nor was this aggregation of tribes under the new name of Franks a singular instance; the same took place in the case of the Alemanni and Saxons.[2]

[1] *Hist. Francor. Epitom. per Fredegar. Schol.* c. ii. (ap. Bouquet, tom. ii. p. 391.) After describing the wanderings of the fugitives from Troy, this writer continues: "Denuo bifaria divisione Europam media ex ipsis pars cum *Francione* eorum Rege ingressa fuit. Qui Europam pervagantes cum uxoribus et liberis Rheni ripam occuparunt. Nec procul a Rheno civitatem ad instar Trojæ nominis ædificare conati sunt . . . . *Et per Francionem vocati sunt Franci.*" This *Trojan* theory has been defended in modern times by Türk, Kritische Gesch. der Franken. Conf. Cluveri Germania Antiqua, iii. p. 85. Ludg. Batav. 1616. A false reading in Cicero's Ep. ad Atticum, lib. xiv. epist. 10., where *Fangones* has been corrupted into Frangones, is brought forward to prove that the Franks were known by that name in the time of Cicero. Cluver. iii. 82.

[2] *Cluveri Germ. Antiq.* iii. p. 85.: "Sed tempus nunc etiam ostendatur, quo Francorum nomen dictæ nationes, in unum corpus congressæ, primum sibi imposuerint. Factum id ego arbitror paullo post quam Alemanni, contra Romanos rebellantes, in Galliam Rhætiamque excurrere cœperunt."

The actuating causes of these new unions are unknown. They may be sought for either in external circumstances, such as the pressure of powerful enemies from without, or in an extension of their own desires and plans, requiring the command of greater means, and inducing a wider co-operation of those, whose similarity of language and character rendered it most easy for them to unite. But perhaps we need look no farther for an efficient cause than the spirit of amalgamation which naturally arises among tribes of kindred race and language, when their growing numbers, and an increased facility of moving from place to place, bring them into more frequent contact. The same phenomenon may be observed at certain periods in the history of almost every nation, and the spirit which gives rise to it has generally been found strong enough to overcome the force of particular interests and petty nationalities.

The etymology of the name adopted by the new confederacy is also uncertain. The conjecture which has most probability in its favour is that adopted long ago by Gibbon, and confirmed in recent times by the authority of Grimm, which connects it with the German word Frank (free).[1] The derivation pre-

[1] Grimm's Gesch. der Deutschen Sprache, i. p. 512. Franci Francorum. In old *high* German, Franchon Franchônô; in Anglo-Saxon, Francan Francena; but the old Norse, Frakkar, Frakka, leads us back to the notion "frank and free." Another derivation, says Grimm, has been proposed: from the Gothic *Hramjan* (figere) comes the Frankish *Adchramire,* and after

ferred by Adelung from *frak* (in modern German *frech*, bold), with the inserted nasal, differs from that of Grimm only in appearance. No small countenance is given to this derivation by the constant recurrence in after times of the epithet "*truces*," "*feroces*," which the Franks were so fond of applying to themselves, and which they certainly did everything to deserve. Tacitus speaks of nearly all the tribes, whose various appellations were afterwards merged in that of Frank, as living in the neighbourhood of the Rhine.[1] Of these the principal were the Sicambri (the chief people of the old Iscævonian tribe), who, as there is reason to believe, were identical with the Salian Franks. The confederation further comprised the Bructeri, the Chamavi, Ansibarii, Tubantes, Marsi, and Chasuarii, of whom the five last had formerly belonged to the celebrated Cheruscan league, which, under the hero Arminius, destroyed three Roman legions in the Teutoburgian Forest.[2] The strongest

the substitution of *ph* for *ch* (p. 349.) adframire, the abused framea, the Anglo-Saxon diminutive franca (for frameca), from which *Frank*. For another derivation of the name of *Frank*, vid. Libanii Orat. LX. (ed. Reiske, iii. p. 317.).

[1] *Plin. Nat. Hist.* iv. 28.: "Proximi autem Rheno Istævones, quorum pars . . . Chatti, Cherusci."

[2] *Amm. Mar.* xx. 10.: "(Julianus) Rheno exinde transmisso regionem subito pervasit Francorum, quos Atthuarios (Ampsuarios, Ansuarios) vocant, inquietorum hominum, licentius etiam tum percursantium extima Galliarum." Amm. Mar. (xvii. 8. 9.) and the Emperor Julian speak of the Chamavi as Franks. *Julian. Orat. ad S. P. Q. Athen.* (*Julian. Op.* ed. Spanhem. p. 280.): Ὑπεδεξάμην μὲν μοῖραν τοῦ Σαλίων ἔθνους, Χαμάβους δὲ ἐξήλασα. *Nazar. Paneg. Constant.* 18.: "Quid memorem Bructeros? quid

evidence of the identity of these tribes with the Franks, is the fact that, long after their settlement in Gaul, the distinctive names of the original people were still occasionally used as synonymous with that of the confederation. The Sicambri are well known in the Roman history for their active and enterprising spirit, and the determined opposition which they offered to the greatest generals of Rome.[1] It was on their account that Cæsar bridged the Rhine in the neighbourhood of Bonn, and spent eighteen days, as he informs us with significant minuteness, on the German side of that river. Drusus made a similar attempt against them with little better success. Tiberius was the first who obtained any decided ad-

Chamavos? quid Cheruscos . . . . ?" Gregr. Turon. ii. 9. quotes from Sulpitius Alexander, by whom the *Bricteri* (sic), Chamavi, Ampsuarii, and Chatti are spoken of as Franks. The most certain and direct connection is that existing between the *Sigambri* and the *Franks*. Cluveri, Germ. Antiq. iii. p. 85. Sueton. in Vita Octav. 21. Flor. iv. 12. Conf. Strabo, vii. 1. 4. Cæs. B. G. vi. 35. *Claudian de IV. Consul. Honor.* 446. (ed. Gesner. Lips. 1759):—

> "Ante ducem nostrum flavam sparsere *Sycambri*
> Cæsariem, pavidoque orantes murmure *Franci*
> Procubuere solo."

The Charta Peutingeria has "*Chamavi Elpranci*," probably a corruption of et Franci.

[1] *Hor. Carm.* iv. 2. 33.:—

> "Concines majore poeta plectro
> Cæsarem, quandoque trahet feroces
> Per sacrum clivum, merita decorus
> Fronde, Sygambros."

vantage over them; and even he, by his own confession, was obliged to have recourse to treachery.[1] An immense number of them were then transported by the command of Augustus to the left bank of the Rhine[2], "that," as the Panegyrist expresses it, "they might be compelled to lay aside not only their arms but their ferocity."[3] That they were not, however, even then, so utterly destroyed or expatriated as the flatterers of the Emperor would have us believe, is evident from the fact that they appear again under the same name, in less than three centuries afterwards, as the most powerful tribe in the Frankish confederacy.

The league thus formed was subject to two strong motives, either of which might alone have been sufficient to impel a brave and active people into a

Hor. Carm. iv. 14. 51.: —

"Te cæde gaudentes Sygambri
Compositis venerantur armis."

Cæs. B. G. iv. 16. Dio Cassius, liv. 33.

[1] *Tac. Ann.* ii. 26.: "Se (Tiberium) novies a Divo Augusto in Germaniam missum, *plura consilio quam vi perfecisse; sic* Sugambros in deditionem acceptos."

[2] *Tac. Ann.* xii. 39.: ". . . ut quondam Sugambri excisi aut in Galliæ trajecti forent. . . ." Conf. *S. Aurel. Victor. Epitom.* i.: "(Octavianus) Sigambros in Galliam transtulit." *Sueton.* Octav. c. 21.: "Sygambros dedentes se traduxit in Galliam atque in proximis Rheno agris collocavit."

[3] *Paneg. Incert. Auctor.* c. 4. (apud Bouquet, tom. i. p. 714.): "Nec contentus vicisse ipsas in Romanas transtulit nationes, ut non solum arma, sed etiam feritatem ponere cogerentur." Eumenii Paneg. Constantio, cc. viii. ix.

career of migration and conquest. The first of these was *necessity*,—the actual want of the necessaries of life for their increasing population,—and the second *desire*, excited to the utmost by the spectacle of the wealth and civilisation of the Gallic provinces.[1]

As long as the Romans held firm possession of Gaul, the Germans could do little to gratify their longings; they could only obtain a settlement in that country by the consent of the Emperor and on certain conditions. Examples of such merely tolerated colonisation were the Tribocci, the Vangiones, and the Ubii at Cologne. But when the Roman Empire began to feel the numbness of approaching dissolution, and, as is usually the case, first in its extremities, the Franks were amongst the most active and successful assailants of their enfeebled foe: and if they were attracted towards the West by the abundance they beheld of all that could relieve their necessities and gratify their lust of spoil, they were also impelled in the same direction by the Saxons, the rival league, a people as

[1] The Germans were very poor. Cæsar, when speaking of the Volscæ Tectosages, says: "Nunc quoque in eadem *inopia, egestate*, patientia *qua Germani*, permanent."—*B. G.* vi. 24. They were also very numerous. Ariovistus transferred 120,000 Germans across the Rhine.—Cæs. B. G. i. 31. The *Usipetes* and *Tencteri* numbered 430,000. *Cæs. B. G.* vi. 24.: "Gallis autem provinciæ propinquitas et transmarinarum rerum notitia multa ad copiam atque usus largitur." *Tac. Hist.* iv. 73.: "Eadem semper causa Germanis transcendendi in Gallias, libido atque avaritia et mutandæ sedis amor, ut relictis paludibus et solitudinibus suis fecundissimum hoc solum vosque ipsos possiderent."

brave and perhaps more barbarous than themselves. A glance at the map of Germany of that period will do much to explain to us the migration of the Franks, and that long and bloody feud between them and the Saxons, which began with the Catti and Cherusci [1], and needed all the power and energy of a Charlemagne to bring to a successful close. The Saxons formed *behind* the Franks, and could only reach the provinces of Gaul by sea. It was natural therefore that they should look with the intensest hatred upon a people who barred their progress to a more genial climate and excluded them from their share in the spoils of the Roman world.

The Franks advanced upon Gaul from two different directions, and under the different names of *Salians*, and *Ripuarians*, the former of whom we have reason to connect more particularly with the Sicambrian tribe. The origin of the words Salian and Ripuarian, which are first used respectively by Ammianus Marcellinus and Jornandes, is very obscure, and has served to exercise the ingenuity of ethnographers.[2] There are, however, no sufficient grounds for a de-

[1] Tac. Germ. xxxvi.

[2] Clovis was called "Sicamber" at his baptism by St. Remi. *Claudian. de Laudibus Stilichonis*, i. 222.: —

> "Ut Sallus jam rura colat, flexosque Sicambri
> In falcem curvent gladios."

Vita Sigismundi (Bouquet, tom. iii. p. 402.): "In ipsis temporibus cum *Sicambrorum* gens." Ammian. Marcell. (xvii. 8.) is the first who calls the Franks *Salians*: ". . . . petit primos omnium Francos quos consuetudo Salios appellavit."

cided opinion. At the same time it is by no means improbable that the river Yssel, Isala or Sal [1] (for it has borne all these appellations), may have given its name to that portion of the Franks who lived along its course. With still greater probability may the name Ripuarii or Riparii, be derived from Ripa, a term used by the Romans to signify the Rhine.[2] These dwellers on *the Bank* were those that remained in their ancient settlements while their Salian kinsmen were advancing into the heart of Gaul.

It would extend the introductory portion of this work beyond its proper limits to refer, however briefly, to all the successive efforts of the Franks to gain a permanent footing upon Roman ground. Though often defeated, they perpetually renewed the contest; and when Roman historians and panegyrists inform us that the whole nation was several times "*utterly destroyed*," the numbers and geographical position in which we find them a short time after every such annihilation, prove to us the vanity of such accounts. Aurelian, as we have seen, defeated

[1] *Cluver. Germ. Antiq.* iii. p. 60.: "Francorun quondam gentem ad hoc usque pertinuisse flumen (Isalam), infra docebo. Julianus Cæsar in oratione ad senatum populumque Atheniensem, item Marcellinus lib. xvii., et Zosimus lib. iii.; Notitia imperii et Sidonius Apollin. carm. vii. Salios habent gentem Francicam. Hodie regio Isalæ, adjacens vocatur vulgo Salland," seq. Leo, in his "Mittelalter," derives the name *Terra Salica* from *Saljan tradere;* so that the Salii would be the Franks who settled in newly conquered possessions.

[2] *Tac. Germ.* xxiii.: "Proximi *Ripæ*." *Ibid.* xxix.: "Non multum ex *Ripa*."

them at Mayence, in A.D. 242, and drove them into the swamps of Holland. They were routed again about twelve years afterwards by Gallienus[1]; but they quickly recovered from this blow, for in A.D. 276 we find them in possession of sixty Gallic cities[2], of which Probus[3] is said to have deprived them, and to have destroyed 400,000 of them and their allies on Roman ground.[4] In A.D. 280, they gave their aid to the usurper Proculus, who claimed to be of Frankish blood, but was nevertheless betrayed by them[5]; and in A.D. 288, Carausius the Menapian was sent to clear the seas of their roving barks. But the latter found it more agreeable to shut his eyes to their piracies, in return for a share of the booty, and they afterwards aided in protecting him from the chastisement due to his treachery, and in investing him with the imperial purple in Britain.[6]

[1] Zon. Ann. xii. 24. (ed. B. G. Niebuhr. Bonn, 1844.)

[2] Zosim. Hist. (ed. Reitemeier. Lips. 1784), l. i. c. 37.

[3] Zos. i. 68.

[4] *Vopisc. in Prob.* 13.: "His gestis cum ingenti exercitu Gallias petit; quæ omnes, occiso Postumio turbatæ fuerunt, interfecto Aureliano, a Germanis possessæ. Tanta autem illic prælia feliciter gessit, ut a barbaris sexaginta per Gallias nobilissimas reciperet civitates . . . cæsis prope quadringentis millibus, qui Romanum occupaverunt solum."

[5] *Vopisc. in Procul.*: "Ipsis prodentibus Francis quibus familiare est ridendo fidem frangere. . . ."

[6] Eumenii Paneg. Const. Cæs. 3. 9. (Paneg. Veter. ed. H. J. Arntzenius, Traject. ad Rhenum, 1790). Eumenius (*Pan. Const. Cæs.* xvii.) speaks of a victory gained by Constantius's troops over the Franks near London, to the great delight of the Londoners: "Enimvero, Cæsar invicte, tanto Deorum immortalium tibi est addicta, consensu omnium quidem, quos adortus fueris, hostium,

In the reign of Maximian, we find a Frankish army, probably of Ripuarians, at Treves, where they were defeated by that emperor; and both he and Diocletian adopted the title of "Francicus," which many succeeding emperors were proud to bear. The first appearance of the Salian Franks, with whom this history is chiefly concerned, is in the occupation of the Batavian Islands, in the Lower Rhine. They were attacked in that territory in A.D. 292, by Constantius Chlorus, who, as is said, not only drove them out of Batavia, but marched, triumphant and unopposed, through their own country as far as the Danube. The latter part of this story has little foundation either in history or probability.[1]

The most determined and successful resistance to their progress was made by Constantine the Great, in the first part of the fourth century. We must, however, receive the extravagant accounts of the imperial annalists with considerable caution.[2] It is evident, even from their own language, that the

sed præcipue internecio Francorum, ut illi quoque milites vestri, qui per errorem nebulosi ut paullo ante dixi maris abjuncti *ad oppidum Londiniense* pervenerant, quiquid ex mercenaria illa multitudine barbarorum prælio superfuerat, cum direpta civitate, fugam capessere cogitarent, passim tota urbe confecerint; et non solum provincialibus vestris in cæde hostium dederint salutem, sed etiam in spectaculo voluptatem."

[1] *Eumenii Paneg.* ii.: ". . . a ponte Rheni usque ad Danubii transitum Guntiensem, deusta atque exhausta penitus Alamania."

[2] Eumen. Paneg. Const. Aug. vi., x., xii. (Arntzen. p. 362.). In chap. xii. Eumenius says: ". . . . exercitu repente trajecto inopinantes adortus es, non quo aperto Marte diffideres, ut cui palam congredi maluisses," &c.

great emperor effected more by stratagem than by force. He found the Salians once more in Batavia, and, after defeating them in a great battle, carried off a large number of captives to Treves, the chief residence of the emperor, and a rival of Rome itself in the splendour of its public buildings.

It was in the circus of this city, and in the presence of Constantine, that the notorious "Ludi Francici" were celebrated; at which several thousand Franks, including their kings Regaisus and Ascaricus, were compelled to fight with wild beasts, to the inexpressible delight of the Christian spectators.[1] "Those of the Frankish prisoners," says Eumenius, "whose perfidy unfitted them for military service, and their ferocity for servitude, were given to the wild beasts as a show, and wearied the raging monsters by their multitude."[2] "This magnificent spectacle" Nazarius praises, some twenty years after it had taken place,

[1] Eumenius (*Paneg. Const. Aug.* xxii.) gives us a high idea of the magnificence of Treves: "Video Circum Maximum æmulum, credo, Romano; video basilicas et forum, opera regia, sedemque justitiæ in tantam altitudinem suscitari, ut se sideribus et cælo digna et vicina promittant."

[2] Incerti Paneg. (Maximiano et Constantino), iv. (Arntzen. i. 319.). *Eumen. Paneg. Const.* x., xi., xii.: "Reges ipsos Franciæ, qui per absentiam patris tui pacem violaverant, non dubitasti ultimis punire cruciatibus." "Puberes, qui in manus venerunt, quorum nec perfidia erat apta militiæ, nec ferocia servituti, ad pœnas spectaculo dati, sævientes bestias multitudine sua fatigarunt." *Incerti Paneg. Const. Aug.* xxiii.: "Tantum captivorum multitudinem bestiis objicit, ut ingrati et perfidi non minus doloris ex ludibrio sui quam ex ipsa morte patiantur."

in the most enthusiastic terms, comparing Constantine to a youthful Hercules who had strangled two serpents in the cradle of his empire.[1] Eumenius calls it a "daily and eternal victory," and says that Constantine had erected terror as a bulwark against his barbarian enemies.[2] This terror did not, however, prevent the Franks from taking up arms to revenge their butchered countrymen, nor the Alemanni from joining in the insurrection. The skill and fortune of Constantine generally prevailed; he destroyed great numbers of the Franks and the "*innumeræ gentes*" who fought on their side, and really appears for a time to have checked their progress.[3]

It is impossible to read the brief yet confused account of these incessant encounters between the Romans and Barbarians, without coming to the conclusion that only half the truth is told; that while every advantage gained by the former is greatly exaggerated, the successes of the latter are passed over in silence. The most glorious victory of a Roman general procures him only a few months repose, and the destruction of "hundreds of thousands" of Franks and Alemanni seems but to increase their numbers.[4] We may fairly say of the Franks, what

[1] Nazarii Paneg. Const. Aug. xvi. (Paneg. Vet. ed. Arntzen. i. 581.).

[2] *Eumen. Paneg. Const. Aug.* xi.: "Neque enim jam Rheni gurgitibus, sed nominis tui terrore munimur."

[3] Lactantius de Mort. Persecutor. xxix. (ed. Le Brun, Paris, 1748). Incert. Paneg. Const. Aug. xxii.

[4] Naz. Paneg. ix. 17. 37.

Julian and Eutropius have said respecting the Goths, that they were not so utterly annihilated as the panegyrists pretend, and that many of the victories gained over them cost "more money than blood."[1]

The death of Constantine was the signal for a fresh advance on the part of the Franks. Libanius, the Greek rhetorician, when extolling the deeds of Constans, the youngest son of Constantine the Great, says that the emperor stemmed the impetuous torrent of barbarians "by a love of war even greater than their own."[2] He also says that they received overseers; but this was no doubt on *Roman* ground, which would account for their submission, as we know that the Franks were more solicitous about real than nominal possession. During the frequent struggles for the Purple which took place at this period, the aid of the Franks was sought for by the different pretenders, and rewarded, in case of success, by large grants of land

[1] The panegyrist groans out his sense of the difficulty of repressing the Franks: "Trucem Francum quantæ molis est superare vel capere!"

[2] *Libanii Orat.* (ed. Reiske. Altenburg, 1795), iii. 316. 318. (Orat. lx.): . . . αὐτὸς τὰ περὶ τὴν ἑσπέραν ἔθνη βάρβαρα πανταχόθεν περικεχυμένα τὴν ἡσυχίαν ἄγειν κατηνάγκασε. . . . . Κατ' ἄλλο μὲν οὐδὲν μείζω δὲ τῆς ἐκείνων περὶ τὰς μάχας προθυμίας τὴν οἰκείαν προδείξας. P. 319.: Φρακτοὶ μὲν οὖν τοιοῦτον ὑπῆλθον ζυγὸν δουλείας. τὸ γὰρ μὴ ἔχειν ἕτερους λητίζεσθαι τοῦτο ἐκείνοις δουλεία. . . . Ἐδέξαντο παρ' ἡμῶν ἄρχοντας ὥσπερ ἐπόπτας τῶν δρωμένων. Conf. Idatii Fasti Consul. in Eusebii Pamph. Chron. Canon. (ed. J. J. Scaliger. Amst. 1608), p. 33. Eusebii Pamph. Chron. lib. i. (ed. Scalig. p. 48.).

within the limits of the empire.[1] The barbarians consented, in fact, to receive as a gift what had really been won by their own valour, and could not have been withheld. Even previous to the reign of Constantine, some Frankish generals had risen to high posts in the service of Roman emperors. Magnentius, himself a German, endeavoured to support his usurpation by Frankish and Saxon mercenaries; and Silvanus, who was driven into rebellion by the ingratitude of Constantius, whom he had faithfully served, was a Frank.[2]

The state of confusion into which the empire was thrown by the turbulence and insolence of the Roman armies, and the selfish ambition of their leaders, was highly favourable to the progress of the Franks in Gaul. Their next great and general movement took place in A.D. 355, when, along the whole Roman frontier from Strasburg to the sea, they began to cross the Rhine, and to throw themselves in vast numbers upon the Gallic provinces, with the full determination of forming permanent settlements. But again the relenting fates of Rome raised up a hero in the person of the Emperor Julian, worthy to have lived in the most glorious period of her history. After one or

[1] Julian. Orat. ed. Spanhem, Lips. 1696, i. and ii., in Laudem Constantii.

[2] Julian (Orat. i. 34, 42.) says that Magnentius was a slave, a barbarian captive: Ἀνδράποδον γὰρ ἦν τῶν ἐκείνου προγόνων. Aurelius Victor calls him a barbarian, and Athanasius, with his usual vigour of style, speaks of him as τὸν διάβολον Μαγνέντιον. *Amm. Marcell.* xv. 5.: "Exoritur jam hinc rebus afflictis haud dispari provinciarum malo."

two unsuccessful efforts, Julian succeeded in retaking Cologne and other places, which the Germans, true to their traditionary hatred of walled towns, had laid bare of all defences.[1]

In the last general advance of the Franks in A. D. 355, the Salians had not only once more recovered Batavia, but had spread into Toxandria, in which they firmly fixed themselves.[2] It is important to mark the date of this event, because it was at this time that the Salians made their first permanent settlement on the left bank of the Rhine, and by the acquisition of Toxandria laid the foundation of the kingdom of Clovis. Julian indeed attacked them there in A. D. 358, but he had probably good reasons for not reducing them to despair, as we find that they were permitted to retain their newly acquired lands, on condition of acknowledging themselves subjects of the empire.[3]

[1] Julian. Orat. ii., and Epist. ad S. P. Q. Athen. *Amm. Marcell.* xv. 8.: "Constantium vero exagitabant assidui nuntii, deploratas jam Gallias indicantes, nullo renitente ad internecionem, barbaris vastantibus universa." *Mam. Grat. Act. Jul. Aug.* (Paneg. Vet. H. J. Arntzenius, Traj. ad Rh. 1790), iv.: "Florentissimas quondam antiquissimasque urbes Barbari possidebant . . . . In hoc statu Imperator noster Gallias nactus minimum habuit adversus hostem laboris atque discriminis; una acie Germania universa deleta est, uno prælio debellatum." Zosimus (iii. 2.) says that 60,000 Alemanni fell in the battle at Strasbourg, and as many were driven into the Rhine. Chodonomarius, king of the Franks, was among the captives. Amm. Marcell. xvi. 3.

[2] Zos. iii. 6. *Amm. Marcell.* xvii. 8.: ". . . ausos (Salios) olim in Romano solo apud Toxandriam locum habitacula sibi figere prælicenter."

[3] Julian. Epist. ad S. P. Q., Athen. pp. 278, 279.

He was better pleased to have them as soldiers than as enemies, and they, having felt the weight of his arm, were by no means averse to serve in his ranks, and to enrich themselves by the plunder of the East. Once in undisputed possession of Toxandria, they gradually spread themselves further and further, until, at the beginning of the fifth century, we find them occupying the left bank of the Rhine; as may safely be inferred from the fact that Tongres, Arras, and Amiens are mentioned as the most northern of the Roman stations. At this time they reached Tournai, which became henceforth the chief town of the Salian Franks. The Ripuarians, meanwhile, were extending themselves from Andernach downwards along the middle Rhine, and gained possession of Cologne about the time of the conquest of Tournai by their Salian brethren. On the left of the river they held all that part of *Germania Secunda* which was not occupied by the Salians. In *Belgica Secunda*, they spread themselves as far as the Moselle, but were not yet in possession of Treves, as we gather from the frequent assaults made by them upon that city. The part of Gaul therefore now subject to the Ripuarians was bounded on the north-west by the *Silva Carbonaria*, or *Kohlenwald;* on the south-west by the Meuse and the forest of Ardennes; and on the south by the Moselle.

We shall be the less surprised that some of the fairest portions of the Roman Empire should thus fall an almost unresisting prey to barbarian invaders,

when we remember that the defence of the empire itself was sometimes committed to the hands of Frankish soldiers. Those of the Franks who were already settled in Gaul, were often engaged in endeavouring to drive back the ever-increasing multitude of fresh barbarians, who hurried across the Rhine to share in the bettered fortunes of their kinsmen, or even to plunder them of their newly-acquired riches.[1] Thus Mallobaudes, who is called king of the Franks, and held the office of *Domesticorum Comes* under Gratian, commanded in the Imperial army which defeated the Alemanni at Argentaria.[2] And, again, in the short reign of Maximus, who assumed the purple in Gaul, Spain, and Britain, near the end of the fourth century, we are told that three Frankish kings, Genobaudes, Marcomeres, and Sunno, crossed the Lower Rhine, and plundered the country along the river as far as Cologne; although the whole of Northern Gaul was already in possession of their countrymen. The generals Nonnius and Quintinus, whom Maximus had left behind him at Treves, the seat of the Imperial government in Gaul, hastened to Cologne, from which the marauding Franks had already retired with their booty.[3] Quintinus crossed

[1] These country cousins were by no means well received by their civilised brethren.

[2] *Amm. Marcell.* xxxi. 10: " . . . Mallobaudem . . . Regem Francorum virum bellicosum et fortem." Argentaria = Strasbourg; (or Colmar in Alsace?) Orosii adv. Pag. Hist. vii. 33.

[3] Hist. Franc. Epit. per Fredeg. Schol. iii. (apud Bouquet, tom. ii.).

the Rhine, in pursuit, at Neus, and, unmindful of the fate of Varus in the Teutoburgian wood, followed the retreating enemy into the morasses.[1] The Franks, once more upon friendly and familiar ground, turned upon their pursuers, and are said to have destroyed nearly the whole Roman army with poisoned arrows. The war continued, and was only brought to a successful conclusion for the Romans by the courage and conduct of Arbogastes, a Frank in the service of Theodosius. Unable to make peace with his barbarous countrymen[2], and sometimes defeated by them, this general crossed the Rhine when the woods were leafless, ravaged the country of the Chamavi, Bructeri, and Catti, and having slain two of their chiefs named Priam and Genobaudes, compelled Marcomeres and Sunno to give hostages.[3] The submission of the Franks must have been of short continuance, for we read that in A.D. 398 these same kings, Marcomeres and Sunno, were again found ravaging the left bank of the Rhine by Stilicho.[4] This famous warrior defeated

[1] *Sulp. Alex. apud. Greg. Tur.* ii. 9.: "... pæne omnibus, qui militibus præerant, exstinctis, paucis effugium tutum nox et latibula sylvarum præstitere."

[2] Hist. Franc. Epit. per Fredeg. iii.

[3] Sulp. Alex. ap. Greg. Tur. ii. 9.

[4] Great as was the merit of Stilicho, Claudian contrives to put him in an almost ridiculous light by his fulsome adulation. Drusus and Trajan were miserable bunglers when compared to him! See *Claud. de Laud. Stil.* i. 193. 196, 197.: —

"Cedant, Druse, tui, cedant, Trajane, labores.
. . . . . totidemque diebus
Edomuit Rhenum, quot vos potuistis in annis."

them in a great battle, and sent the former, or perhaps both of them, in chains to Italy, where Marcomeres died in prison.

The first few years of the fifth century are occupied in the struggle between Alaric the Goth and Stilicho, which ended in the sacking of Rome by the former in the year 410 A.D., the same in which he died.[1]

While the Goths were inflicting deadly wounds on the very heart of the empire, the distant provinces of Germany and Gaul presented a scene of indescribable confusion. Innumerable hosts of Astingians, Vandals, Alani, Suevi, and Burgundians, threw themselves like robbers upon the prostrate body of Imperial Rome, and scrambled for the gems which fell from her costly diadem. In such a storm the Franks could no longer sustain the part of champions of the empire, but doubtless had enough to do to defend themselves and hold their own. We can only guess at the fortune which befel the nations in that dark period, from the state in which we find them when the glimmering light of history once more dawns upon the chaos.

Of the internal state of the Frankish league in these times, we learn from ancient authorities absolutely nothing on which we can safely depend. The blank is filled up by popular fable. It is in this period, about 417 A.D., that the reign of *Pharamond* is placed, of whom we may more than doubt whether

[1] Alaric had the high distinction of appearing before the gates of Rome, next after Hannibal. But what a different Rome did he find!

he ever existed at all. To this hero was afterwards ascribed, not only the permanent conquests made at this juncture by the various tribes of Franks, but the establishment of the monarchy, and the collection and publication of the well-known Salic laws. The sole foundation for this complete and harmonious fabric is a passage interpolated into an ancient chronicle of the fifth century; and, with this single exception, Pharamond's name is never mentioned before the seventh century.[1] The whole story is perfected and rounded off by the author of the "Gesta Francorum," according to whom, Pharamond was the son of Marcomeres, the prince who ended his days in the Italian prison. The fact that *nothing is known of him by Gregory of Tours or Fredegarius* is sufficient to prevent our regarding him as an historical personage.[2] To this may be added that he is not mentioned in the prologue of the Salic law, with which his name has been so intimately associated by later writers.

Though well authenticated names of persons and

[1] *Prosp. in Chron.* a Pithœo ed. ad an. xxvi. Honorii: "Faramundus regnat in Francia." No value whatever is to be set on this passage. Of the work of Prosper, who lived in the fifth century, two MSS. are extant, one of which appears complete and uncorrupted, and contains no reference to Pharamond. The other is full of irrelevant interpolations, and among them the passage above quoted, which probably dates from the seventh century. *Henschenius*, in Exegesi de Epistola Tungrensi, doubts whether his name occurs before the ninth century.

[2] *Gesta Franc.* iv. (ap. Bouquet, tom. ii.): "Elegerunt Faramundum filium ipsius Marcomiri, et levaverunt eum super se regem crinitum." The Gesta Francor., as is well known, are of later date than the history of Gregory of Tours.

places fail us at this time, it is not difficult to conjecture what must have been the main facts of the case. Great changes took place among the Franks, in the first half of the fifth century, which did much to prepare them for their subsequent career. The greater portion of them had been mere marauders, like their German brethren of other nations: they now began to assume the character of settlers; and as the idea of founding an extensive empire was still far from their thoughts, they occupied in preference the lands which lay nearest to their ancient homes. There are many incidental reasons which make this change in their mode of life a natural and inevitable one. The country whose surface had once afforded a rich and easily collected booty, and well repaid the hasty foray of weeks, and even days, had been stripped of its movable wealth by repeated incursions of barbarians still fiercer than themselves. All that was above the surface the Alan and the Vandal had swept away, the treasures which remained had to be sought for with the plough. The Franks were compelled to turn their attention to that agriculture which their indolent and warlike fathers had hated; which required fixed settlements, and all the laws of property and person indissolubly connected therewith. Again, though there is no sufficient reason to connect the Salic laws with the mythical name of Pharamond, or to suppose that they were altogether the work of this age (since we know from Tacitus that the Germans had similar laws in their ancient forests), yet it is very probable

that this celebrated code now received the form in which it has come down to us. This view of the case is strongly supported by internal evidence in the laws themselves, which, according to the "*Prologue*," were written while the Franks were still heathens, and are peculiarly suited to the simple wants of a barbarous people. Even the fiction of the foundation of the Frankish monarchy by Pharamond may indicate some real and important change. That there was at that time but one king "in Francia" is of course untrue; but it seems highly probable, when taken in connection with the subsequent history, that the princes who reigned over the different Frankish tribes established in Gaul belonged, at this period, to *one family*. And this is the truth which appears to lie at the foundation of the story of this mythical personage.

The next important and well established historical fact which we meet with in this dreary waste of doubt and conjecture, is the Conquest of Cambrai by Clodion, in A.D. 445. This acquisition forms the third stage in the progress of the Salian Franks towards the complete possession of Gaul. Of this event it will be necessary to speak more at large.

The foremost among the kindred chiefs of the different Frankish tribes at this period was Clodion, whom some modern historians, and among them Gibbon, have represented, on the slenderest foundation, as the father of Merovæus, and first of the race of long-haired kings. Gregory of Tours gives no

countenance to the statement thus boldly made[1]; he does not know that Meroveus was the son of Clodion, nor has he anything to say about Merovæus himself.[2] The residence of Clodion was at Dispargum, "*in agro Thoringorum*," the situation of which is doubtful: many suppose it to be the same as the modern Dysborch in Brabant.[3] It was no doubt in the neighbourhood of the Lower Rhine. That the power of Clodion was considerable is evinced by the magnitude of his undertakings. The growing numbers of the Franks in Gaul, continually increased by fresh swarms of settlers from their ancient seats, made an extension of their territory not merely desirable, but even necessary to their existence. Clodion therefore boldly undertook the conquest of the *Belgica Secunda*, a part of which was still in possession of the Romans. Having sent forward spies to Cambrai, and learned from them that it

[1] *Greg. Turon.* ii. 9. (Bouquet, Rer. Gal. et Franc. tom. ii.): "Ferunt etiam tunc Chlogionem utilem ac nobilissimum in gente sua Regem Francorum fuisse, qui apud Dispargum castrum habitabat, quod est in termino Thoringorum."

[2] The very name of Merovæus becomes suspicious when considered in connection with the doubts of Gregory. It may have been invented to explain the name of the Merovingian Dynasty, just as we have a king *Francio*, to account for the name of the Frankish nation. (Vide Hist. Franc. Epit. per Fred. ii.) The reader of Gibbon will hardly suspect the real state of the case. "The death of Clodion," he says, "after a reign of twenty years, exposed his kingdom to the discord and ambition of his two sons. *Meroveus* the younger," &c.

[3] Vide Bucherii Atrebatis, Belgium Roman. Eccles. et Civile (Leodii, 1655, fol.), lib. xv. c. 10.

was insufficiently defended, he advanced upon that city, and succeeded in taking it. After spending a few days within the walls of his new acquisition, he marched as far as the river Somme. His progress was checked by Aetius and Majorian, who surprised him in the neighbourhood of Arras, at a place called Helena (Lens), while celebrating a marriage, and forced him to retire.[1] Yet at the end of the war, the Franks remained in full possession of the country which Clodion had overrun; and the Somme became the boundary of the Salian land upon the south-west, as it continued to be until the time of Clovis.[2]

Clodion died in A.D. 448, and was thus saved from the equally pernicious alliance or enmity of the ruthless conqueror Attila.[3] This "Scourge of God," as he delighted to be called, appeared in Gaul about the year 450 A.D., at the head of an innumerable host of mounted Huns; a race so singular in their aspect and habits as to seem scarcely human, and compared with whom, the wildest Franks and Goths must have appeared rational and civilised beings.

[1] Prosp. Chr. p. 50. *Sidon. Carm.* v. 213. (Sirmondi. Paris, 1652.) *Paneg. Jul.*, Val. Majoriano: —

"Post tempore parvo
Pugnastis pariter, Francus qua Cloco patentes
Atrebatum terras pervaserat."

[2] Idat. Chron. p. 23.

[3] Prosp. Pith. an. Theod. 22. seq. Olatii (Nicolai) Atila ed. Jo. Sambucus in ap. Decad. Rer. Ungar. Anton. Bonfinii, Francof. 1581. Jorn. Get. c. 35. Sigeb. Gembl. ad an. 453.

The time of Attila's descent upon the Rhine was well chosen for the prosecution of his scheme of universal dominion. Between the fragment of the Roman Empire, governed by Aetius, and the Franks under the successors of Clodion, there was either open war or a hollow truce. The succession to the chief power in the Salian tribe was the subject of a violent dispute between two Frankish princes, the elder of whom is supposed by some to have been called Merovæus. We have seen reason to doubt the existence of a prince of this name; and there is no evidence that either of the rival candidates was a son of Clodion. Whatever their parentage or name may have been, the one took part with Attila, and the other with the Roman Aetius, on condition, no doubt, of having their respective claims allowed and supported by their allies.[1] In the bloody and decisive battle of the Catalaunian Fields round Châlons, Franks, under the name of Leti and Ripuarii, served under the so-called Merovæus in the army of Aetius, together with Theoderic and his Visigoths. Among the forces of Attila another body of Franks was arrayed, either by compulsion, or instigated to this unnatural course by the fierce hatred of party spirit. From the result of the battle of Châlons, we must suppose that the ally of Aetius succeeded to the throne of Clodion.

The effects of the invasion of Gaul by Attila were

[1] Sidon. Apoll. Carm. vii. 330. Greg. Turon. ii. 7. Idatii Chron. p. 25.

neither great nor lasting, and his retreat left the German and Roman parties in much the same condition as he found them. The Roman Empire indeed was at an end in that province, yet the valour and wisdom of Ægidius enabled him to maintain, as an independent chief, the authority which he had faithfully exercised, as Master-General of Gaul, under the noble and virtuous Magorian.[1] The extent of his territory is not clearly defined, but it must have been, in part at least, identical with that of which his son and successor, Syagrius, was deprived by Clovis. Common opinion limits this to the country between the Oise, the Marne, and the Seine, to which some writers have added Auxerre and Troyes. The respect in which Ægidius was held by the Franks, as well as his own countrymen, enabled him to set at defiance the threats and machinations of the barbarian Ricimer[2], who virtually ruled at Rome, though in another's name. The strongest proof of the high opinion they entertained of the merits of Ægidius, is said to have been given by the Salians in the reign of their next king. The prince, to whom the name Merovæus has been arbitrarily assigned, was succeeded by his son Childeric, in A. D. 456.[3] The conduct of this licentious youth was such as to disgust and alienate

[1] Greg. Turon. ii. 11, 12. Idat. Chron. p. 28. Sidon. Ap. v. 505.

[2] Idat. Chron. p. 26. Sidon. Ap. ii. 360.

[3] Sigeb. Gembl. an. 448. Greg. Turon. ii. 9. 12. Hist. Franc. Epit. per Fred. c. 11., Bouq. tom. ii.

his subjects, who had not yet ceased to value female honour, nor adopted the loose manners of the Romans and their Gallic imitators. The authority of the Salian kings over the fierce warriors of their tribe was held by a precarious tenure. The loyalty which distinguished the Franks in later times had not yet arisen in their minds, and they did not scruple to send the corrupter of their wives and daughters into ignominious exile.[1] Childeric took refuge with Bissinus (or Bassinus), king of the Thuringians, a people dwelling on the river Unstrut. It was then that the Franks, according to the somewhat improbable account of Gregory, unanimously chose Ægidius for their king, and actually submitted to his rule for the space of eight years.[2] At the end of that period, returning affection for their native prince, the mere love of change, or the machinations of a party, induced the Franks to recall Childeric from exile, or, at all events, to allow him to return.[3] Whatever

[1] The exile appears, however, to have foreseen that his disgrace would be but temporary, since, as we are told, he obtained a promise from his faithful friend Wiomardus to do all in his power to soothe his irritated subjects, and to send him the half of a golden coin, which they divided between them, as a sign that the time was come when he might return in safety. Greg. Turon. ii. 12.

[2] Greg. Turon. ii. 12. Idat. Chron. p. 28. It is very remarkable, that the fact of Ægidius, who is well known in Roman history, having been king of the Franks for eight years should not be referred to by Roman historians.

[3] Hist. Franc. Epit. per. Fred. c. ii. This chronicler tells us that the Franks were disgusted by the heavy taxes which Ægidius, according to the treacherous advice of Wiomadus, kept continually

may have been the cause of his restoration, it does not appear to have been the consequence of an improvement in his morals. The period of his exile had been characteristically employed in the seduction of Basina, the wife of his hospitable protector at the Thuringian Court. This royal lady, whose character may perhaps do something to diminish the guilt of Childeric in our eyes, was unwilling to be left behind on the restoration of her lover to his native country. Scarcely had he re-established his authority when he was unexpectedly followed by Basina, whom he immediately married.[1] The offspring of this questionable alliance was *Clovis*, who was born in the year 466.[2] The remainder of Childeric's reign was chiefly spent in a struggle with the Visigoths, in which Franks and Romans, under their respective leaders, Childeric and Ægidius, were amicably united against the common foe.

We hasten to the reign of Clovis, who, during

increasing. Wiomadus is also said to have advised wholesale murder: "Rebelles exsistunt tibi Franci; nisi præceperis ex eis plurimos jugulari eorum superbiam non mitigas!"

[1] The language of Basina on this occasion is, to speak mildly, very *naïve*. When asked by Childeric on what account she had come from such a distance, she replies: "Novi utilitatem tuam, quod sis valde strenuus; ideoque veni ut habitem tecum; *nam noveris, si in transmarinis partibus aliquem cognovissem utiliorem te, expetissem utique cohabitationem ejus.*" So Gregory of Tours, ii. 12.

[2] Conf. Hist. Franc. Epit. per Fred. xii. The conception and birth of Clovis are related here with fabulous ornament. We have a vision of Childeric on the wedding night, and the interpretation of Basina.

a rule of about thirty years, not only united the various tribes of Franks under one powerful dynasty, and founded a kingdom in Gaul on a broad and enduring basis, but made his throne the centre of union to by far the greater portion of the whole German race.

When Clovis succeeded his father as king of the Salians, at the early age of fifteen, the extent of his territory and the number of his subjects were, as we know, extremely small; at his death, he left to his successors a kingdom more extensive than that of modern France.

The influence of the grateful partiality discernible in the works of Catholic historians and chroniclers towards "the Eldest Son of the Church," who secured for them the victory over heathens on the one side, and heretics on the other, prevents us from looking to *them* for an unbiassed estimate of his character. Many of his crimes appeared to be committed in the cause of Catholicity itself, and these they could hardly see in their proper light. Pagans and Arians would have painted him in different colours; and had any of their works come down to us, we might have sought the truth between the positive of partiality and the negative of hatred. But fortunately, while the chroniclers praise his actions in the highest terms, they tell us what those actions were, and thus compel us to form a very different judgment from their own. It would not be easy to extract from the pages of his greatest admirers the slightest evidence of his possessing any qualities

but those which are necessary to a conqueror. In the hands of Providence he was an instrument of the greatest good to the country he subdued, inasmuch as he freed it from the curse of division into petty states, and furthered the spread of Christianity in the very heart of Europe. But of any word or action that could make us admire or love the man, there is not a single trace in history. His undeniable courage is debased by a degree of cruelty unusual even in his times; and the consummate skill and prudence, which did more to raise him to his high position than even his military qualities, are rendered odious by the forms they take of unscrupulous falsehood, meanness, cunning and hypocrisy.

It will add to the perspicuity of our brief narrative of the conquests of Clovis, if we pause for a moment to consider the extent and situation of the different portions into which Gaul was divided at his accession.

There were in all six independent states: 1st, that of *the Salians*; 2nd, that of *the Ripuarians;* 3rd, that of *the Visigoths;* 4th, that of *the Burgundians;* 5th, *the kingdom of Syagrius;* and, 6th, *Armorica* (by which the whole sea-coast between Seine and Loire was then signified. Of the two first we have already spoken. The Visigoths held the whole of Southern Gaul. Their boundary to the north was the river Loire, and to the east the Pagus Vellavus (Auvergne).

The boundary of the Burgundians on the side of Roman Gaul, was the Pagus Lingonicus (Upper

Marne); to the west they were bounded by the territory of the Visigoths, as above described.

The territory still held by the Romans was divided into two parts, of which the one was held by Syagrius, who, according to common opinion, only ruled the country between Oise, Marne, and Seine; to this some writers have added Auxerre, Troyes, and Orleans. The other — viz., that portion of Roman Gaul *not* subject to Syagrius — is of uncertain extent. Armorica (Bretagne and Maine), was an independent state, inhabited by Britons and Saxons; but what was its form of government is not exactly known. It is important to bear these geographical divisions in mind, because they coincide with the successive Frankish conquests made under Clovis and his sons.

It would be unphilosophical to ascribe to Clovis a preconceived plan of making himself master of these several independent states, and of not only overthrowing the sole remaining pillar of the Roman Empire in Gaul, but, what was far more difficult, of subduing other German tribes, as fierce and independent, and in some cases more numerous than his own. In what he did, he was merely gratifying a passion for the excitements of war and acquisition, and that desire of expanding itself to its utmost limits, which is natural to every active, powerful, and imperious mind.[1] He must indeed have been more than

[1] "Dans les temps barbares" (says M. Guizot, 2me Essai sur l'Hist. de France, p. 61. seq.), "comme dans les temps civilisés,

human to foresee, through all the obstacles that lay in his path, the career he was destined by Providence to run. He was not even master of the whole Salian tribe; and besides the Salians, there were other Franks on the Rhine, the Scheldt, the Meuse, and the Moselle, in no way inferior to his own subjects, and governed by kings of the same family as himself. Nor was Syagrius, to whom the anomalous power of his father Ægidius had descended, a despicable foe. His merits, indeed, were rather those of an able lawyer and a righteous judge than of a warrior; but he had acquired by his civil virtues a reputation which made him an object of envy to Clovis, who dreaded perhaps the permanent establishment of a Roman dynasty in Gaul. There were reasons for attacking Syagrius first, which can hardly have escaped the cunning of Clovis, and which doubtless guided him in the choice of his earliest victim. The very integrity of the noble Roman's character was one of these reasons. Had Clovis commenced the work of destruction by attacking his kinsmen Sigebert of Cologne and Ragnachar of Cambrai, he would not only have received no aid from Syagrius in his unrighteous aggression, but might have found him ready to oppose it. But against Syagrius it was easy for Clovis to excite the national spirit of his brother Franks, both in and out of his own territory. In

c'est par l'activité née du besoin d'étendre en tous sens son existence, son nom, et son empire, que se fait reconnaître un homme supérieur."

such an expedition, even had the kings declined to take an active part, he might reckon on crowds of volunteers from every Frankish *gau*.

As soon therefore as he had emerged from the forced inactivity of extreme youth (a period in which, fortunately for him, he was left undisturbed by his less grasping and unscrupulous neighbours), he determined to bring the question of pre-eminence between the Franks and Romans to as early an issue as possible. Without waiting for a plausible ground of quarrel, he challenged Syagrius, *more Germanico*, to the field, that their respective fates might be determined by the God of Battles. Ragnachar of Cambrai was solicited to accompany his treacherous relative on this expedition, and agreed to do so.[1] Chararich, another Frankish prince, whose alliance had been looked for, preferred waiting until fortune had decided, with the prudent intention of siding with the winner, and coming fresh into the field in time to spoil the vanquished.[2]

Syagrius was at Soissons, which he had inherited from his father, when Clovis, with characteristic decision and rapidity, passed through the wood of Ardennes, and fell upon him with resistless force. The Roman was completely defeated, and the victor, having taken possession of Soissons, Rheims, and other Roman towns in the Belgica Secunda, extended his frontier to the river Loire, the boundary of the Visigoths. This battle took place in A. D. 486.

[1] Greg. Tur. ii. 27. [2] Ibid. 41.

We know little or nothing of the materials of which the Roman army was composed. If it consisted entirely of Gauls, accustomed to depend on Roman aid, and destitute of the spirit of freemen, the ease with which Syagrius was defeated will cause us less surprise. Having lost all in a single battle, the unfortunate Roman fled for refuge to Toulouse, the court of Alaric, king of the Visigoths, who basely yielded him to the threats of the youthful conqueror.[1] But one fate awaited those who stood in the way of Clovis: Syagrius was immediately put to death, less in anger, than from the calculating policy which guided all the movements of the Salian's unfeeling heart.

During the next ten years after the death of Syagrius, there is less to relate of Clovis than might be expected from the commencement of his career. We cannot suppose that such a spirit was really at rest: he was probably nursing his strength, and watching his opportunities; for, with all his impetuosity, he was not a man to engage in an undertaking without good assurance of success.

Almost the only expedition of this inactive period of his life, is one recorded in a doubtful passage by Gregory of Tours, as having been made against the Tongrians. This people lived in the ancient country of the Eburones, on the Elbe, and had formerly been subjects of his mother Basina. The Tongrians were

[1] *Greg. Tur.* ii. 27.: "At ille (Alaricus) metuens, ne propter eum iram Francorum incurreret, *ut Gothorum pavere mos est*, vinctum legatis tradidit."

defeated, and their territory was, nominally at least, incorporated with the kingdom of Clovis.[1]

In the year 496 A. D. the Salians began that career of conquest, which they followed up with scarcely any intermission until the death of their warrior king.

The Alemanni, extending themselves from their original seats on the right bank of the Rhine, between the Main and the Danube, had pushed forward into *Germanica Prima*, where they came into collision with the Frankish subjects of King Sigebert of Cologne. Clovis flew to the assistance of his kinsman, and defeated the Alemanni in a great battle in the neighbourhood of Zülpich. He then established a considerable number of his Franks in the territory of the Alamanni, the traces of whose residence are found in the names of Franconia and Frankfort.

The same year is rendered remarkable in ecclesiastical history by the conversion of Clovis to Christianity. In A. D. 493, he had married Clothildis, Chilperic the king of Burgundy's daughter, who, being herself a Christian, was naturally anxious to turn away her warlike spouse from the rude faith of his forefathers. The real result of her endeavours it is impossible to estimate, but, at all events, she has not received from

[1] Greg. Tur. ii. 27. Theoderic, Clovis's son, describes to the Franks, at a subsequent period, the horrible cruelties committed by the Tungrians, or Thuringians, on the Franks in this war, which they are accused of beginning by a savage inroad into the Frankish territory. Greg. Tur. iii. 7.

history the credit of success. The mere suggestions of an affectionate wife would be considered as too simple and prosaic a means of accounting for a change involving such mighty consequences. The conversion of Clovis was so vitally important to the interests of the Catholic Church, that the chroniclers of that wonder-loving age, profuse in the employment of extraordinary means for the smallest ends, could never be brought to believe that this great event was the result of anything but a miracle of the most public and striking character.

The way in which the convictions of Clovis were changed is unknown to us, but there were natural agencies at work, and his conversion is not, under the circumstances, a thing to excite surprise. According to the common belief, however, in the Roman Church, it was in the battle of Zülpich that the heart of Clovis, callous to the pious solicitude of his wife, and the powerful and alluring influence of the catholic ritual, was touched by a special interposition of Providence in his behalf. When the fortune of the battle seemed turning against him, he thought of the God whom his wife adored, of whose power and majesty he had heard so much, and vowed that if he escaped the present danger, and came off victorious, he would suffer himself to be baptized, and become the champion of the Christian Faith.[1] Like another

[1] The whole story rests on a slender foundation, for Gregory of Tours, though he both describes the battle of Zülpich, and speaks of the conversion of Clovis as having taken place during a battle, does not connect the two events, and assigns no date

Constantine, he saw written on the face of Heaven that his prayer was heard; he conquered, and fulfilled his promise at Christmas in the same year, when he was baptized by Remigius at Rheims, with three thousand of his followers.[1]

The sincerity of Clovis's conversion has been called in question for many reasons, — such as the unsuitability of his subsequent life to Christian principles, — but chiefly on the ground of the many political advantages to be derived from a public profession of the Catholic Faith. We are too ready with such explanations of the actions of distinguished characters, too apt to forget that politicians are also men, and to overlook the very powerful influences which lie nearer to their hearts than even political calculation. A spirit was abroad in the world, drawing men away from the graves of a dead

at all to the latter. *Greg. Tur.* ii. 30.: "Regina vero," he says, "non cessabat prædicare regi, ut Deum verum cognosceret . . sed nullo modo ad hæc credenda poterat commoveri, donec tandem *aliquando* bellum contra Alamannos commoveretur." *Ibid.* ii. 29. Clovis, according to Gregory, replies to the queen's arguments: "Deorum nostrorum jussione cuncta creantur et prodeunt, Deus vero vester nihil posse manifestatur, *et quod magis est, nec de Deorum genere probatur.*" Unfortunately for Clothildis's argument, her first child, who had been baptized in the Christian Church, died, and Clovis ascribed its early death to its Christian baptism.

[1] Greg. Tur. ii. 30. Hist. Franc. Epit. per Fred. xxi. Greg. Tur. ii. 31. It was on this occasion that St. Remigius is said to have used the words: "Mitis depone colla *Sicamber;* adora quod incendisti, incende quod adorasti;" from which we may infer that the distinctive names of the several tribes which went to form the Frankish League were not yet forgotten.

faith to the life and light of the Gospel,—a spirit which not even the coldest and sternest heart could altogether resist. There was something, too, peculiarly imposing in the attitude of the Christian Church at that period. All else in the Roman world seemed dying of mere weakness and old age — the Christian Church was still in the vigour of youth, and its professors were animated by indomitable perseverance and boundless zeal. All else fell down in terror before the Barbarian conqueror — the fabric of the Church seemed indestructible, and its ministers stood erect in his presence, as if depending for strength and aid upon a power, which was the more terrible, because indefinite in its nature and uncertain in its mode of operation.

Nor were there wanting to the Catholic Church, even at that stage of its development, those external means of influence which tell with peculiar force upon the barbarous and untutored mind. The emperors of the Roman world had reared its temples, adorned its shrines, and regulated its services, in a manner which seemed to them best suited to the majesty of Heaven and their own. Its altars were served by men distinguished by their learning, and by that indestructible dignity of deportment, which is derived from conscious superiority. The praises of God were chaunted forth in well-chosen words and impressive tones, or sung in lofty strains by tutored voices; while incense rose to the vaulted aisle, as if to bear the prayers of the kneeling multitude to the very gates of Paradise.

And Clovis was as likely to be worked upon by such means as the meanest of his followers. We must not suppose that the discrepancy between his Christian profession and his public and private actions, which we discern so clearly, was equally evident to himself. How should it be so? His own conscience was not specially enlightened beyond the measure of his age. The bravest warriors of his nation hailed him as a patriot and hero, and the ministers of God assured him that his victories were won in the service of Truth and Heaven. It is always dangerous to judge of the sincerity of men's religious — perhaps we should say *theological* — convictions by the tenor of their moral conduct, and this even in our own age and nation; but far more so in respect to men of other times and countries, at a different stage of civilisation and religious development, at which the scale of morality was not only lower, but differently graduated from our own.

The conscience of a Clovis remained undisturbed in the midst of deeds whose enormity makes us shudder; and, on the other hand, how trivial in our eyes are some of those offences which loaded him with the heaviest sense of guilt! The eternal laws of the God of justice and mercy might be broken with impunity; and what we should call the basest treachery and the most odious cruelty, employed to compass the destruction of an heretical or pagan enemy; but woe to him who offended St. Martin, or laid a finger on the property of the meanest of his servants! When Clovis was seeking to gratify his

lust of power, he believed, no doubt, that he was at the same time fighting under the banner of Christ, and destroying the enemies of God. And no wonder, for many a priest and bishop thought the same, and told him what they thought.

We are, however, far from affirming that the political advantages to be gained from an open avowal of the Catholic Faith at this juncture escaped the notice of so astute a mind as that of Clovis. No one was more sensible of those advantages than he was. The immediate consequences were indeed apparently disastrous. He was himself fearful of the effect which his change of religion might have upon his Franks, and we are told that many of them left him and joined his kinsman Ragnarich.[1] But the ill effects, though immediate, were slight and transient, while the good results went on accumulating from year to year. In the first place, his baptism into the Catholic Church conciliated for him the zealous affection of his Gallo-Roman subjects, whose number and wealth, and, above all, whose superior knowledge and intelligence, rendered their aid of the utmost value. With respect to his own Franks, we are justified in supposing that, removed as they were from the

[1] *Greg. Tur.* ii. 31. Gregory represents Clovis as saying to St. Remigius: "Libenter te, sanctissime Pater, audiam, sed restat unum, *quod populus qui me sequitur, non patitur relinquere Deos suos.*" *Hincmar, Vita S. Remigii, Acta Sanct. Octob.* t. i. p. 94.: "Multi denique de Francorum exercitu nec-dum ad fidem conversi cum Regis parente Raganario ultra Summam fluvium aliquamdiu degerunt."

sacred localities with which their faith was intimately connected, they either viewed the change with indifference, or, wavering between old associations and present influences, needed only the example of the king to decide their choice, and induce them to enlist under the banner of the Cross.

The German neighbours of Clovis had either preserved their ancient faith or adopted the Arian heresy. His conversion therefore was advantageous or disadvantageous to him, as regarded *them*, according to the objects he had in view. Had he really desired to live with his compatriot kings on terms of equality and friendship, his reception into a hostile Church would certainly not have furthered his views. But nothing was more foreign to his thoughts than friendship and alliance with any of the neighbouring tribes. His desire was to reduce them all to a state of subjection to himself. He had the genuine spirit of the conqueror, which cannot brook the sight of independence ; and his keen intellect and unflinching boldness enabled him to see his advantages and to turn them to the best account.

Even in those countries in which Heathenism or Arian Christianity prevailed, there was generally a zealous and united community of Catholic Christians (including all the Romance inhabitants), who, being outnumbered and sometimes persecuted, were inclined to look for aid abroad. Clovis became by his conversion the object of hope and attachment to such a party in almost every country on the continent of Europe. He had the powerful support of the whole

body of the Catholic clergy, in whose hearts the interests of their Church far outweighed all other considerations. In other times and lands (in our own for instance) the spirit of loyalty and the love of country have often sufficed to counteract the influence of theological opinions, and have made men patriots in the hour of trial, when their spiritual allegiance to an alien head tempted them to be traitors. But what patriotism could Gallo-Romans feel, who for ages had been the slaves of slaves? or what loyalty to barbarian oppressors, whom they despised as well as feared?

The happy effects of Clovis's conversion were not long in showing themselves. In the very next year after that event (A. D. 497) the Armoricans, inhabiting the country between the Seine and Loire, who had stoutly defended themselves against the *heathen* Franks, submitted with the utmost readiness to the royal convert, whom bishops delighted to honour; and in almost every succeeding struggle the advantages he derived from the strenuous support of the Catholic party become more and more clearly evident.

In A. D. 500 Clovis reduced the Burgundians to a state of semi-dependence, after a fierce and bloody battle with Gundobald, their king, at Dijon on the Ousche. In this conflict, as in almost every other, Clovis attained his ends in a great measure by turning to account the dissensions of his enemies. Gundobald had called upon his brother Godegisil, who ruled over one division of their tribe, to aid him in repelling the attack of the Franks. The call was answered, in appearance at least; but in the decisive struggle

Godegisil, according to a secret understanding, deserted with all his forces to the enemy. Gundobald was of course defeated, and submitted to conditions which, however galling to his pride and patriotism, could not have been very severe, since we find him immediately afterwards punishing the treachery of his brother, whom he besieged in the city of Vienne, and put to death in an Arian Church.[1]

The circumstances of the times, rather than the moderation of Clovis, prevented him from calling Gundobald to account. A far more arduous struggle was at hand, which needed all the wily Salian's resources of power and policy to bring to a successful issue—the struggle with the powerful king and people of the Visigoths, whose immediate neighbour he had become after the voluntary submission of the Armoricans in A. D. 497. The valour and conduct of their renowned king Euric[2] had put the Western Goths in full possession of all that portion of Gaul which lay between the rivers Loire and Rhone, together with nearly the whole of Spain. That distinguished monarch had lately been succeeded by his son Alaric II., who was now in the flower of youth. It was in the war with this ill-starred prince — the most difficult and doubtful in which he had been engaged — that Clovis experienced the full advantages of his recent change of faith. King Euric, who was an Arian, wise and great as he appears to have been in

[1] Greg. Tur. ii. 32, 33. Greg. Epit. Fredeg. 22.
[2] Greg. Tur. ii. 25. Conf. Jornandes, Getica, 45.

many respects, had alienated the affections of multitudes of his people by persecuting the Catholic minority[1]; and though the same charge does not appear to lie against Alaric, it is evident that the hearts of his orthodox subjects beat with no true allegiance towards their heretical king. The baptism of Clovis had turned their eyes towards him, as one who would not only free them from the persecution of their theological enemies, but procure for them and their Church a speedy victory and a secure predominance. The hopes they had formed, and the aid they were ready to afford him, were not unknown to Clovis, whose eager rapacity was only checked by the consideration of the part which his brother-in-law Theoderic, King of the Ostrogoths, was likely to take in the matter. This great and enlightened Goth, whose refined magnificence renders the contemptuous sense in which we use the term Gothic more than usually inappropriate, was ever ready to mediate between kindred tribes of Germans, whom on every suitable occasion he exhorted to live in unity, mindful of their common origin. He is said on this occasion to have brought about a meeting between Clovis and Alaric on a small island in the Loire in the neighbourhood of Amboise.[2] The story is very doubtful, to say the least. Had he done so much, he

[1] *Greg. Tur.* ii. 25. (He is accused of blocking up the paths which led to the Churches *with thorns*): "Scilicet ut raritas ingrediendi oblivionem faceret fidei." *Ibid.* ii. 36.: "Multi jam tunc ex Galliis habere Francos dominos summo desiderio cupiebant."

[2] Hist. Générale de Languedoc, v. 19.

would probably have done more, and have shielded his youthful kinsman with his strong right arm. Whatever he did was done in vain. The Frankish conqueror knew his own advantages and determined to use them to the utmost. He received the aid not only of his kinsman Sigebert of Cologne, who sent an army to his support under Chararich, but of the king of the Burgundians, who was also a Catholic. With an army thus united by a common faith, inspired by religious zeal, and no less so by the Frankish love of booty, Clovis marched to almost certain victory over an inexperienced leader and a kingdom divided against itself.

It is evident, from the language of Gregory of Tours, that this conflict between the Franks and Visigoths was regarded by the orthodox party of his own and preceding ages as a religious war, on which, humanly speaking, the prevalence of the Catholic or the Arian creed in Western Europe depended. Clovis did everything in his power to deepen this impression. He could not, he said, endure the thought that "those Arians" held a part of his beautiful Gaul.[1] As he passed through the territory of Tours, which was supposed to be under the peculiar protection of St. Martin, he was careful to preserve the strictest discipline among his soldiers, that he might further conciliate the Church and sanctify his undertaking.[2]

[1] *Greg. Tur.* ii. 37.: "Valde moleste fero quod hi Ariani partem teneant Galliarum."

[2] One of Clovis's soldiers took away some hay from a peasant who lived in the lands belonging to St. Martin's church. "'*Quo*

On his arrival at the city of Tours, he publicly displayed his reverence for the patron saint, and received the thanks and good wishes of a whole chorus of priests assembled in St. Martin's Church. He was guided (according to one of the legends by which his progress has been so profusely adorned) through the swollen waters of the river Vienne by "a hind of wonderful magnitude;" and, as he approached the city of Poitiers, a pillar of fire (whose origin we may trace, as suits our views, to the favour of heaven or the treachery of man) shone forth from the cathedral, to give him the assurance of success, and to throw light upon his nocturnal march.[1] The Catholic bishops in the kingdom of Alaric were universally favourable to the cause of Clovis[2], and several of them, who had not the patience to postpone the manifestation of their sympathies, were expelled by Alaric from their sees.[3] The majority indeed made a virtue of necessity, and prayed continually and loudly, if not sincerely, for their lawful monarch. Perhaps they had even in that age learned to appreciate the efficacy of mental reservation.

Conscious of his own weakness, Alaric retired before

dicto citius gladio peremto,' ait, 'et ubi erit spes victoriæ, si beatus Martinus offenditur?'" — *Greg. Tur.* ii. 37.

[1] *Greg. Tur.* ii. 37.: "... pharus ignea de Basilica S. Hilarii egressa. . . ."

[2] Vid. Ep. Aviti Episc. Viennens. Chlodovecho, ap. Max. Bib. vet. Patrum, tom. ix. p. 1677.

[3] *Greg. Tur.* ii. 36.: "Quia desiderium tuum est ut Francorum dominatio possideat terram hanc," said the Goths who deprived Quintianus, Bishop of Rodez.

his terrible and implacable foe, in the vain hope of receiving assistance from the Ostrogoths. He halted at last in the plains of Vouglé, behind Poitiers, but even then rather in compliance with the wishes of his soldiers than from his own deliberate judgment. His soldiers, drawn from a generation as yet unacquainted with war, and full of that overweening confidence which results from inexperience, were eager to meet the enemy. Treachery, also, was at work to prevent him from adopting the only means of safety, which lay in deferring as long as possible the too unequal contest. The Franks came on with their usual impetuosity, and with a well-founded confidence in their own prowess; and the issue of the battle was in accordance with the auspices on either side. Clovis, no less strenuous in actual fight than wise and cunning in council, exposed himself to every danger, and fought hand to hand with Alaric himself. Yet the latter was not slain in the field, but in the disorderly flight into which the Goths were quickly driven.[1] The victorious Franks pursued them as far as Bordeaux, where Clovis passed the winter, while Theoderic, his son, was overrunning Auvergne, Quincy, and Rovergne. The Goths, whose new king was a minor, made no further resistance; and in the following year the Salian chief took possession of the royal treasure at Toulouse.[2] He also took the town

[1] *Greg. Tur.* ii. 37.: "Cumque *secundum consuetudinem* Gothi terga vertissent." Greg. Epit. per Fredeg. 25.

[2] *Ibid.*: "Cui (Clodoveo) Dominus tantam gratiam tribuit, ut in ejus contemplatione muri sponte conruerent."

of Angoulême, at the capture of which he was doubly rewarded for his services to the Church, for not only did the inhabitants of that place rise in his favour against the Visigothic garrison, but the very walls, like those of Jericho, fell down at his approach![1]

A.D. 508. A short time after these events, Clovis received the titles and dignity of Roman Patricius and Consul from the Greek Emperor Anastasius; who appears to have been prompted to this act more by motives of jealousy and hatred towards Theoderic the Ostrogoth, than by any love he bore the restless and encroaching Frank.[2] The meaning of these obsolete titles, as applied to those who stood in no direct relation to either division of the Roman Empire, has never been sufficiently explained. We are at first surprised that successful warriors and powerful kings like Clovis, Pepin, and Charlemagne himself, should condescend to accept such empty honours at the hands of the miserable eunuch-ridden monarchs of the East. That the Byzantine Emperors should affect a superiority over contemporary sovereigns is intelligible enough; the weakest idiot among them,

[1] In the Gesta Francor. xvii. (ap. Bouquet, ii. p. 555.) we are told that Clovis returned to Tours and enriched the church of St. Martin with many costly presents. Among other things he had given a horse, which he wished to repurchase, and sent 100 solids for that purpose. "Quibus datis *equus ille nulla tenus se movit.* At ille (Chlodoveus) ait: 'Date illis alios centum solidos;' cumque alios solidos dedissent, statim ipse equus solutus abiit. Tunc cum lætitia Rex ait: 'Vere B. Martinus bonus est in auxilio, *sed carus in negotio.*'"

[2] Greg. Tur. ii. 38.

who lived at the mercy of his women and his slaves, had never resigned one tittle of his pretensions to that universal empire which an Augustus and a Trajan once possessed. But whence the acquiescence of Clovis and his great successors in this arrogant assumption? We may best account for it by remarking how long the prestige of power survives the strength that gave it. The sun of Rome was set, but the twilight of her greatness still rested on the world. The German kings and warriors received with pleasure, and wore with pride, a title which brought them into connection with that imperial city, of whose universal dominion, of whose skill in arms and arts, the traces lay everywhere around them.

Nor was it without some solid advantages in the circumstances in which Clovis was placed. He ruled over a vast population, which had not long ceased to be subjects of the Empire, and still rejoiced in the Roman name. He fully appreciated their intellectual superiority, and had already experienced the value of their assistance. Whatever, therefore, tended to increase his personal dignity in their eyes (and no doubt the solemn proclamation of his Roman titles had this tendency) was rightly deemed by him of no small importance.

In the same year that he was invested with the diadem and purple robe in the church of St. Martin at Tours the encroaching Franks had the southern and eastern limits of their kingdom marked out for them by the powerful hand of Theoderic the Great. The brave but peace-loving Goth had

trusted too much to his influence with Clovis, and had hoped to the last to save the unhappy Alaric, by warning and mediation. The slaughter of the Visigoths, the death of Alaric himself, the fall of Angoulême and Toulouse, the advance of the Franks upon the Rhone, where they were now besieging Arles, had effectually undeceived him. He now prepared to bring forward the only arguments to which the ear of a Clovis is ever open, — the battle-cry of a superior army. His faithful Ostrogoths were summoned to meet in the month of June, A. D. 508, and he placed a powerful army under the command of Eva (Ibba or Hebba), who led his forces into Gaul over the southern Alps. The Franks and Burgundians, who were investing Arles and Carcassonne, raised the siege and retired, but whether without or in consequence of a battle, is rendered doubtful by the conflicting testimony of the annalists. The subsequent territorial position of the combatants, however, favours the account that a battle did take place, in which Clovis and his allies received a most decided and bloody defeat.[1]

The check thus given to the extension of his kingdom at the expense of other German nations, and the desire perhaps of collecting fresh strength for a more successful struggle hereafter, seem to

[1] Jornandes, c. 58., speaks of a battle in which the Franks and their allies lost 30,000 men: "Nunquam Gothus Francis cessit, dum viveret Theodericus. . . . Non minus trophæum de Francis per Hibbam suum Comitem in Galliis acquisivit plus xxx millibus Francorum in prœlio cæsis."

have induced Clovis to turn his attention to the destruction of his Merovingian kindred. The manner in which he effected his purpose is related with a fulness which naturally excites suspicion. But though it is easy to detect both absurdity and inconsistency in many of the romantic details with which Gregory has furnished us, we see no reason to deny to his statements a foundation of historical truth.

Clovis was still but one of several Frankish kings; and of these Sigebert of Cologne, king of the Ripuarians, was little inferior to him in the extent of his dominions and the number of his subjects. But in other respects—in mental activity and bodily prowess—"the lame" Sigebert was no match for his Salian brother.[1] The other Frankish rulers were, Chararich, of whom mention has been made in connection with Syagrius, and Ragnachar (or Ragnachas), who held his court at Cambrai. The kingdom of Sigebert extended along both banks of the Rhine, from Mayence down to Cologne; to the west along the Moselle as far as Treves; and on the east to the river Fulda and the borders of Thuringia. The Franks who occupied this country are supposed to have taken possession of it in the reign of Valentinian III., when Mayence, Cologne, and Treves, were conquered by a host of Ripuarians. Sigebert, as we have seen, had come to the aid of Clovis, in two very important

[1] Greg. Tur. ii. 37. He was lame from a wound received at the battle of Zülpich.

battles with the Alemanni and the Visigoths, and had shown himself a ready and faithful friend whenever his co-operation was required. But gratitude was not included among the graces of the champion of Catholicity, who only waited for a suitable opportunity to deprive his ally of throne and life. The present juncture was favourable to his wishes, and enabled him to rid himself of his benefactor in a manner peculiarly suited to his taste. An attempt to conquer the kingdom of Cologne by force of arms would have been but feebly seconded by his own subjects, and would have met with a stout resistance from the Ripuarians, who were conscious of no inferiority to the Salian tribe. His efforts were therefore directed to the destruction of the royal house, the downfall of which was hastened by internal divisions. Clotaire (or Clotarich), the expectant heir of Sigebert, weary of hope deferred, gave a ready ear to the hellish suggestions of Clovis, who urged him, by the strongest appeals to his ambition and cupidity, to the murder of his father.[1] Sigebert was slain by his own son in the Buchonian Forest near Fulda. The wretched parricide endeavoured to secure the further connivance of his tempter, by offering him a share of the blood-stained treasure he had acquired. But Clovis, whose part in the transaction was probably unknown, affected

[1] *Greg. Tur.* ii. 40.: "Cum autem Chlodovechus Rex apud Parisios moraretur, misit clam ad filium Sigiberti, dicens, 'Ecce pater tuus senuit, et pede debili claudicat. Si ille, inquit, moreretur, recte tibi cum amicitia nostra regnum illius redderetur.'

a feeling of horror at the unnatural crime, and procured the immediate assassination of Clotaire; an act which rid him of a rival, silenced an embarrassing accomplice, and tended rather to raise than to lower him in the opinion of the Ripuarians. It is not surprising, therefore, that when Clovis proposed himself as the successor of Sigebert, and promised the full recognition of all existing rights, his offer should be joyfully accepted. In A. D. 509 he was elected king by the Ripuarians, and raised upon a shield in the city of Cologne, according to the Frankish custom, amid general acclamation.

"And thus," says Gregory of Tours, in the same chapter in which he relates the twofold murder of his kindred, "God daily prostrated his enemies before him and increased his kingdom, because he walked before him with an upright heart, and did what was pleasing in his eyes!" [1]—so completely did his services to the Catholic Church conceal his moral deformities from the eyes of even the best of the ecclesiastical historians.

To the destruction of his next victim, Chararich, whose power was far less formidable than that of Sigebert, he was impelled by vengeance as well as ambition. That cautious prince, instead of joining the other Franks in their attack upon Syagrius, had stood aloof and waited upon fortune. Yet we can hardly attribute the conduct of Clovis towards him

[1] *Greg. Tur.* ii. 40.: "Prosternebat enim quotidie Deus hostes ejus sub manu ipsius, et augebat regnum ejus, eo quod ambularet recto corde coram eo, et faceret quæ placita erant in oculis ejus."

chiefly to revenge, for his most faithful ally had been his earliest victim; and friend and foe were alike to him, if they did but cross the path of his ambition. After getting possession of Chararich and his son, by tampering with their followers, Clovis compelled them to cut off their royal locks and become priests; subsequently, however, he caused them to be put to death.

Ragnachar of Cambrai, whose kingdom lay to the north of the Somme, and extended through Flanders and Artois, might have proved a more formidable antagonist, had he not become unpopular among his own subjects by the disgusting licentiousness of his manners.[1] The account which Gregory gives of the manner in which his ruin was effected is more curious than credible, and adds the charge of swindling to the black list of crimes recorded against the man who "walked before God with an upright heart." According to the historian, Clovis bribed the followers of Ragnachar with armour of gilded iron, which they mistook, as he intended they should, for gold. Having thus crippled by treachery the strength of his enemy, Clovis led an army over the Somme, for the purpose of attacking him in his own territory. Ragnachar prepared to meet him, but was betrayed by his own soldiers and delivered into the hands of the invader. Clovis, with facetious cruelty, reproached the fallen monarch for having disgraced their common family by suffering himself to be bound, and then

[1] *Hincmar, Vit. S. Remig. Acta Sanctor.* i. p. 149.

split his skull with an axe. The same absurd charge was brought against Richar, the brother of Ragnachar, and the same punishment inflicted on him. A third brother was put to death at Mans.

Gregory refers, though not by name, to other kings of the same family, who were all destroyed by Clovis. "Having killed many other kings," he says, "who were his kinsmen, because he feared they might deprive him of his power, he extended his kingdom through the whole of Gaul." He also tells us that the royal hypocrite, having summoned a general assembly, complained before it, with tears in his eyes, that he was "alone in the world." "Alas, for me!" he said, "I am left as an alien among strangers, and have no relations who can assist me." This he did, according to Gregory, "not from any real love of his kindred, or from remorse at the thought of his crimes, but that he might find out any more relations and put them also to death."[1]

Clovis died at Paris, in A. D. 511, in the forty-fifth year of his age and the thirtieth of his active, blood-stained, and eventful reign. He lived therefore only five years after the decisive battle of Vouglé.

Did we not know, from the judgment he passes on other characters in his history, that Gregory of Tours was capable of appreciating the nobler and gentler

[1] Greg. Tur. ii. 41, 42, 43. We are here reminded of the sentimental Frenchman, who, having been condemned to death for the murder of his father and mother, besought the judge to have pity on *a poor orphan*.

qualities of our nature, we might easily imagine, as we read what he says of Clovis, that, Christian bishop as he was, he had an altogether different standard of right and wrong from ourselves. Not a single virtuous or generous action has the panegyrist found to record of his favoured hero, while all that he does relate of him tends to deepen our conviction that this favourite of Heaven, in whose behalf miracles were freely worked, whom departed saints led on to victory, and living ministers of God delighted to honour, was quite a phenomenon of evil in the moral world, from his combining in himself the opposite and apparently incompatible vices of the meanest treachery, and the most audacious wickedness.

We can only account for this amazing obliquity of moral vision in such a man as Gregory, by ascribing it to the extraordinary value attached in those times (and would that we could say in those times only) to external acts of devotion, and to every service rendered to the Roman Church. If, in far happier ages than those of which we speak, the most polluted consciences have purchased consolation and even hope, by building churches, endowing monasteries, and paying reverential homage to the dispensers of God's mercy, can we wonder that the extraordinary services of a Clovis to Catholic Christianity should cover even his foul sins as with a cloak of snow?

He had, indeed, without the slightest provocation, deprived a noble and peaceable neighbour of his power and life. He had treacherously murdered his royal kindred, and deprived their children of their birth-

right. He had on all occasions shown himself the heartless ruffian, the greedy conqueror, the blood-thirsty tyrant; but by his conversion he had led the way to the triumph of Catholicism; he had saved the Roman Church from the Scylla and Charybdis of Heresy and Paganism, planted it on a rock in the very centre of Europe, and fixed its doctrines and traditions in the hearts of the conquerors of the West.

Other reasons, again, may serve to reconcile the politician to his memory. The importance of the task which he performed (though from the basest motives), and the influence of his reign on the destinies of Europe can hardly be overrated. He founded the monarchy on a firm and enduring basis. He levelled, with a strong though bloody hand, the barriers which separated Franks from Franks, and consolidated a number of isolated and hostile tribes into a powerful and united nation. It is true, indeed, that this unity was soon disturbed by divisions of a different nature; yet the idea of its feasibility and desirableness was deeply fixed in the national mind; a return to it was often aimed at, and sometimes accomplished.

CHAP. III.

FROM THE DEATH OF CLOVIS TO THE DEATH OF CLOTAIRE I., SOLE MONARCH OF THE FRANKS.

A.D. 511—561.

THERE can be no stronger evidence of the strength and consistency which the royal authority had attained in the hands of Clovis, than the peaceful and undisputed succession of his sons to the vacant throne. It would derogate from our opinion of the political sagacity of Clovis, were we to attribute to his personal wishes the partition of his kingdom among his four sons. We have no account, moreover, of any testamentary dispositions made by him to this effect, and are justified in concluding that the division took place in accordance with the general laws of inheritance which then prevailed among the Germans. However clearly he may have foreseen the disastrous consequences of destroying the unity which it had been one object of his life to effect, his posthumous influence would hardly have sufficed to reconcile his younger sons to their own exclusion, supported as they would naturally be by the national sympathy in the unusual hardship of their lot.

Of the four sons of Clovis, Theoderic (Dietrich Thierry), Clodomir, Childebert, and Clotar (Clotaire)

the eldest, who was then probably about twenty-four years of age, was the son of an unknown mother, and the rest, the offspring of the Burgundian princess Clothildis. The first use they made of the royal power which had descended to them was to divide the empire into four parts; in which division, though Gregory describes them as sharing "æqua lance,"[1] the eldest son appears to have had the lion's share.[2] We should in vain endeavour to understand the principles on which this partition was made, and it is no easy matter to mark the limits of the several kingdoms. Theoderic, King of Austrasia (or Metz), for example, obtained the whole of the Frankish territories which bordered on the Rhine, and also some provinces in the south of Gaul. His capital cities were Metz and Rheims, from the former of which his kingdom took its name. Clodomir had his residence at Orleans, Childebert at Paris, and Clotaire at Soissons; and these three cities were considered as the capitals of the three divisions of the empire over which they ruled.[3]

[1] Greg. Tur. iii. 1.

[2] This may be explained by supposing that Theoderic, in the military expeditions he conducted during his father's reign, acquired land on his own account.

[3] *Clodomir* had the central parts of the modern France, answering nearly to Beance, Anjou, Touraine and Berri. *Childebert* had the lands along the sea from modern Picardy to the Pyrenees, with the exception of Lower Bretagne, which was still in a semi-dependent state. *Clotaire's* kingdom lay between Normandy, Champagne, the sea, and the Scheldt. *Theoderic* had all the possessions of Clovis along the Rhine, Moselle, and Meuse; also the Belgica Prima (the territory about Treves, Metz, Toul, and Verdun), and a large part of Belgica Secunda,

The exact position and limits of their respective territories cannot be defined with any certainty, but we may fairly surmise, from the position of the towns above mentioned, that the middle part of Neustria belonged to the kingdom of Paris, the southern part to Orleans, and the north-eastern to Soissons.

The kingdom of Theoderic, as will be seen by a reference to the map, corresponded in a great measure with the region subsequently called Austrasia (Eastern Land) in contradistinction to Neustria, which included the more recently acquired possessions of the Franks. These terms are so frequently used in the subsequent history, and the distinction they denote was so strongly marked and has been so permanent, that an explanation of them cannot but be useful to the reader.

It is conjectured by Luden, with great probability, that the Ripuarians were originally called the *Eastern* people to distinguish them from the Salian Franks who lived to the west. But when the old home of the conquerors on the right bank of the Rhine was united with their new settlements in Gaul, the latter, as it would seem, were called Neustria or Neustrasia (New Lands); while the term Austrasia came to denote the original seats of the Franks, on what we now call the German bank of the Rhine. The most important difference between them (a difference so great as to lead to their permanent separation into the kingdoms

or the country about Rheims and Chalons-sur-Marne; also a part of Aquitania, including the modern Albigeois, Overci, and Auvergne.

of France and Germany by the treaty of Verdun) was this, that in Neustria the Frankish element was quickly absorbed by the mass of Gallo-Romanism by which it was surrounded; while in Austrasia, which included the ancient seats of the Frankish conquerors, the German element was wholly predominant.

The import of the word Austrasia (Austria, Austrifrancia) is very fluctuating. In its widest sense it was used to denote all the countries incorporated into the Frankish Empire, or even held in subjection to it, in which the German language and population prevailed; in this acceptation it included therefore the territory of the Alemanni, Bavarians, Thuringians, and even that of the Saxons and Frises. In its more common and proper sense it meant that part of the territory of the Franks themselves which was not included in Neustria. It was subdivided into Upper Austrasia on the Moselle, and Lower Austrasia on the Rhine and Meuse.

Neustria (or, in the fulness of the Monkish Latinity, Neustrasia) was bounded on the north by the ocean, on the south by the Loire, and on the south-west towards Burgundy by a line which, beginning below Gien on the Loire, ran through the rivers Loing and Yonne, not far from their sources, and passing north of Auxerre and south of Troyes, joined the river Aube above Arcis. The western boundary line again by which Neustria was separated from Austrasia, commencing at the river Aube, crossed the Marne to the east of Château Thierry,

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and passing through the rivers Aisne and Oise, and round the sources of the Somme, left Cambrai on the east, and reached the Scheldt, which it followed to its mouth.

The tide of conquest had not reached its height at the death of Clovis. Even in that marauding age the Franks were conspicuous among the German races for their love of warlike adventure; and the union of all their different tribes under one martial leader, who kept them almost perpetually in the field, gave them a strength which none of their neighbours were able to resist. The partition of the kingdom afforded indeed a favourable opportunity to the semi-dependent states of throwing off the yoke which Clovis had imposed; but neither the Burgundians nor the Visigoths were in a condition to make the attempt, and Theoderic, the powerful king of the Ostrogoths, was too much occupied by his quarrel with the Greek Emperor to take advantage of the death of Clovis. Under these circumstances the Franks, so far from losing ground, were enabled to extend the limits of their empire and more firmly to establish their supremacy.

The power of Theoderic the Great prevented Clovis from completing the conquest of Burgundy, and its rulers regained before his death a virtual independence of the Franks. The sons of Clovis only wanted a favourable opportunity for finishing the work which their father had begun, and for changing the merely nominal subjection of Burgundy into absolute dependence. And here again it was internal

dissension which prepared the way for the admission of the foreign enemy.

Gundobald, King of Burgundy, died in A.D. 517, leaving two sons, Sigismund and Godomar, as joint successors to his throne. The former of these had married Ostrogotha, a daughter of Theodoric the Great, by whom he had one son, Sigeric. On the death of Ostrogotha, Sigismund took as his second wife a person of low and even menial condition, who pursued the son of the former queen with all the hatred popularly ascribed to step-mothers.[1] Gregory relates that the boy increased the bitterness of her feelings against him by reproaching her for appearing on some solemn occasion in the robe and ornaments of his high-born mother. The new queen sought to revenge herself by exciting the jealousy of her husband against his son. She secretly accused Sigeric of engaging in a plot to obtain the crown for himself and represented him as having been moved to this dangerous and unnatural enterprise by the hopes he cherished of receiving aid from his mighty grandfather. This last suggestion found but too ready an entrance into the heart of Sigismund, and so completely poisoned for the time its natural springs, that he ordered Sigeric to be put to death. Inevitable remorse came quickly, yet too late, and the wretched king buried himself in the monastery of St. Maurice, and sought to atone for his fearful crime by say-

[1] "Sicut novercarum mos est."— *Greg. Tur.* iii. 5.

ing masses day and night for the soul of his murdered son.

In the meantime Clothildis, the widow of Clovis, herself a Burgundian princess, who had lived in retirement at the church of St. Martin since her husband's death, did all in her power to rouse her sons to take vengeance on her cousin Sigismund.[1] It is difficult to conjecture the source of the feeling which thus disturbed her holy meditations in the cloisters of St. Martin's, and filled her heart with schemes of revenge and bloodshed. We can hardly attribute her excitement on this occasion to a keen sense of the cruelty and injustice which Sigeric had suffered. The wife of Clovis must have been too well inured to treachery and blood to be greatly moved by the murder of her second cousin. Some writers have found sufficient explanation of her conduct in the fact that her own father and mother had been put to death in A. D. 492 by Gundobald, the father of Sigismund. But we know that when Gundobald was defeated by Clovis he obtained easy terms, nor was the murder of Clothildis' parents brought against him on that occasion. It is not likely that a thirst for vengeance which such an injury might naturally excite, after remaining unslaked in the heart of Clothildis for nearly thirty years, should have revived with increased intensity on account of a murder committed by one of the hated race upon his own kinsman. A more

[1] *Greg. Tur.* iii. 6.: "Non me pœniteat carissimi vos dulciter enutrisse. Indignamini, quæso, injuriam meam, et patris matrisque meæ mortem sagaci studio vindicate."

probable motive is suggested by a passage in Gregory of Tours, in which he informs us that Theoderic of Metz had married Suavegotta a daughter of Sigismund of Burgundy.[1] Theoderic, as we have said, was the eldest son of Clovis, by an unknown mother, and was evidently the most warlike and powerful of the four Frankish kings. A union between her stepson and the Burgundian dynasty might seem to Clothildis to threaten the welfare and safety of her own sons, to whom her summons to arms appears to have been most particularly addressed. Theoderic took no part in the present war; and on a subsequent occasion, when invited by Clodomir to join him in an expedition against the Burgundians, he positively refused.

The sons of Clothildis, happy in being able to obey their mother's wishes in a manner so gratifying to their own inclinations, made a combined attack upon Burgundy in A. D. 523. Sigismund and Godomar his brother, were defeated, and the former, having been given up to the conquerors by his own followers, was carried prisoner to Orleans; the latter escaped and assumed the reins of government in Burgundy.[2] The Franks, like all barbarians of that age, found it more easy to conquer a province than to keep it. In the very same year, on the retreat of the Frankish army, Godomar was able to retake all the towns which had been surrendered to the Franks, and to possess himself of his late brother's kingdom.

[1] *Greg. Tur.* iii. 5. Conf. Hist. Franc. Epit. per Fredeg. xxxvi. Fortunati Carm. (ap. Bouquet, ii. p. 497. note *c.*). Frodoardus, Hist. Remens. lib. ii.

[2] Greg. Tur. iii. 6.

Clodomir renewed the invasion in the following year. Before his departure he determined to put the captive Sigismund, with his wife and children, to death; nor could the bold intercession of the Abbot Avitus, who threatened him with a like calamity, deter him from his bloody purpose. His answer to the abbot is highly naïve. "It seems to me," he said, "a foolish piece of advice to leave some enemies at home while I am marching against others, so that, with the former in the rear and the latter in front, I may rush between the two wedges of my enemies. Victory will be better and more easily obtained by separating one from the other." In accordance with this *better* plan, he caused his captives to be put to death at Columna near Orleans, and thrown into a well.[1] After thus securing "his rear," he marched against the Burgundians. In the battle which took place on the plain of Veferonce near Vienne, Clodomir was deceived by a feigned retreat of the Burgundian army, and, having been carried in the impetuosity of his pursuit into the midst of the enemy, he was recognised by the royal length of his hair and slain on the field of battle.[2]

[1] *Greg. Tur.* iii. 6.: "Statimque *interfecto* Sigismundo cum uxore et filiis, apud Columnam Aurelianensis urbis vicum in puteum jactari præcipiens." Gibbon (c. xxxviii.), says: "The captive monarch, with his wife and children, were transported to Orleans *and buried alive in a deep well!*"

[2] Hist. Franc. Epit. per Fredeg. xxxvi. *Agathias*, lib. i. p. 14. A.: . . . πεσόντος δὲ αὐτοῦ, ἐπειδὴ τὴν κόμην οἱ Βουργουζίωνες καθειμένην καὶ ἄφετον ἐθεάσαντο καὶ μέχρι τοῦ μεταφρένου κεχαλασμένην. . . . .

The loss of their leader, however, instead of causing a panic among the Franks, inspired them with irresistible fury; they quickly routed the Burgundians, and, after devastating their country with indiscriminate slaughter, compelled them once more to submission.[1] Yet it was not until after a third invasion that Burgundy was finally reduced to the condition of a Frankish province, and even then it retained its own laws and customs; the only marks of subjection consisting in an annual tribute and the liability to serve the Frankish king in his wars.

On the death of Clodomir, his territories were divided among the three remaining kings; and Clotaire, the youngest of them, married the widowed queen Guntheuca. The children of Clodomir, being still young, appear to have been taken no notice of in the partition: they found an asylum with their grandmother Clothildis.[2]

While his half-brothers were enlarging the Frankish frontier towards the south-east, Theoderic, who had declined to join in the attack upon Burgundy, was directing his attention towards Thuringia[3], which he ultimately added to the kingdom of Austrasia. The accession of the Thuringians to the Frankish Empire was the more important because they inhabited those ancient seats from which the Franks themselves had gone forth to the con-

[1] Greg. Tur. iii. 6. *Gesta Francor.* xxi. (ap. Bouquet, ii. p. 556.): "A puero usque ad senes omnes peremerunt."

[2] Greg. Tur. iii. 6.

[3] The present Saxon Duchies and Saxon Prussia.

quest of Gaul, and because it served to give additional strength to the Austrasian kingdom, in which the German element prevailed.

The fall of Thuringia is traced by the historian to the ungovernable passions of one of the female sex, which plays so prominent a part in the history of these times.

About A. D. 528, this kingdom was governed by three princes, Baderic, Hermenfried and Berthar, the second of whom had the high honour, as it was naturally considered, of espousing Amalaberg, the niece of Theoderic the Great. The "happy Thuringia," however, derived anything but advantage from the "inestimable treasure" which, according to her uncle's account of her, it acquired in the Ostrogothic princess.[1] This lady was not unconscious of the dignity she derived from her august relative, and fretted within the narrow limits of the fraction of a petty kingdom. Gregory tells us a singular story of the manner in which she marked her contempt of the possessions of her husband, and at the same time betrayed her ambitious desires.[2] On returning home one day to a

[1] *Cassiodor. Epist. var.* lib. iv. epist. 1. Theoderic the Great, when committing her to the care of Hermenfried, writes thus: "Habebit felix Thoringia, quod nutrivit Italia literis doctam, moribus eruditam, decoram non solum genere quantum et fœminea dignitate, ut non minus patria vestra istius splendeat moribus quam suis triumphis."

[2] Gregory of Tours and Fredegar more justly call her "Uxor iniqua atque crudelis" and "nequissima."

banquet, Hermenfried observed that a part of the table had no cloth upon it; and when he inquired of the queen the reason of this unusual state of things, she told him that it became a king who was despoiled of the centre of his kingdom to have the middle of his table bare. Excited by the suggestions of his queen, Hermenfried determined to destroy his brothers, and made secret overtures to Theoderic of Austrasia, to whom he promised a portion of his expected acquisitions on condition of receiving aid. Theoderic gladly consented, and, in conjunction with Hermenfried, defeated and slew both Baderic and Berthar (Werther). A man who, to serve his ambition, had not shrunk from a double fratricide, was not likely to be very scrupulous in observing his engagements to a mere ally. He entirely forgot his promise to Theoderic and kept the whole of Thuringia to himself.[1] He relied for impunity on his connection with the royal house of the Ostrogoths, his alliance with the Heruli and Warni, and the great increase of his strength in Thuringia itself. But with all these advantages he was no match for Theoderic of Austrasia and his warlike subjects. The death of the latter's great namesake removed the only obstacle which had prevented the Franks from attacking Thuringia. In A. D. 530 the Austrasian king summoned his warlike subjects to march against Hermenfried; and, in order to make the ground of quarrel as general as possible, he expatiated to them on some imaginary

[1] Greg. Tur. iii. 4.

cruelties committed by the Thuringians upon their countrymen. "Revenge," said he, "I pray you, both the injury done to me, and the death of your own fathers; remembering that the Thuringians formerly fell with violence upon our ancestors, and inflicted many evils upon them, when they had given hostages and were desirous of making peace; but the Thuringians destroyed these hostages in various ways, and having invaded the territory of our forefathers, robbed them of all their property, hung up young men by the sinews of their legs, and destroyed more than 200 maidens by a most cruel death." The enumeration of all these horrors ends with some degree of bathos: "But now Hermenfried has cheated me of what he promised." [1]

The Franks, who required no very powerful oratory to induce them to undertake an expedition in which there was prospect of plunder, unanimously declared for war; and Theoderic, in company with his son Theudebert and his brother Clotaire of Soissons, marched into Thuringia. The inhabitants endeavoured to protect themselves from the superior cavalry of the invaders by a stratagem similar to that employed by Robert Bruce at Bannockburn, by digging small holes in front of their own line. They were, however, compelled to retreat to the river Unstrut in Saxon Prussia, where they made a stand, but were defeated with

[1] Greg. Tur. iii. 7. This historian does not tell us when or why these cruelties were committed!

immense carnage, so that the river "was choked with dead bodies, which served as a bridge for the invaders." The whole country was quickly reduced and permanently incorporated with Austrasia. And thus, after a long interval, the Franks repossessed themselves of the ancient homes of their tribe, and by one great victory established themselves in the very heart of Germany, which the Romans from the same quarter had often, but vainly, endeavoured to do.

The growing separation between the German and Romance elements in the Frankish Empire, as represented by Theoderic, King of Metz, on the one side, and his half-brother, on the other, becomes more and more evident as our history proceeds. While the sons of Clothildis were associated in almost every undertaking, Theoderic frequently stood aloof, in a manner which shows that his connection with them was by no means of the same kind as theirs with each other. The conquest of the purely German Thuringia, was undertaken by Theoderic exclusively on his own account and in reliance on his own resources. Clotaire indeed accompanied him in his expedition against that country, but in all probability without any military force, nor does he appear to have put in any claim to a share of the conquered territory.[1] The subjugation of Burgundy, on the other hand, in which the Romance language

[1] Theoderic is said during this very expedition to have made a treacherous attempt on the life of his brother, which he would hardly have ventured to do had Clotaire brought an army into the field. Greg. Tur. iii. 7.

and manners had acquired the ascendancy, was the work of Clotaire and Childebert alone. Theoderic was invited to join them, but refused on the ground of his connection with the King of Burgundy. Whatever may have been his reason for declining so tempting an invitation, it was certainly not want of support from his subjects, for we are told that they were highly irritated by his refusal, and mutinously declared that they would march without him. Yet he adhered to his determination not to join his brothers, and pacified the wrath of his soldiers by leading them against the Arverni, in whose country they committed the most frightful ravages, undismayed by several astounding miracles![1]

An inroad had been previously made upon the Arverni, by Childebert, while Theoderic was still in Thuringia. Childebert had suddenly broken off from the prosecution of this war, and turned his arms against Amalaric, King of the Visigoths, who still retained a portion of Southern Gaul. This monarch had married Clothildis, a daughter of Clovis, from motives of interest and dread of the Frankish power; but appears to have thrown aside his fears, and with them his conciliating policy, on the death of his great father-in-law.[2] We are told that Clothildis suffered the greatest indignities at the

[1] Greg. Tur. iii. 12.

[2] *Procop. Goth.* i. 13. (ap. Muratori Rer. Ital. Script. t. i.): "Rex autem Visigotharum Amalaricus adulta jam ætate *Germanorum potentiam reformidans* eorum Regis Theodeberti (Childeberti ?) sororem in matrimonium duxit."

hands of Amalaric and his Arian subjects for her faithful adherence to the Catholic Church.[1] Where religious predilections are concerned, it is necessary to receive the accounts of the dealings between the Franks and their Arian neighbours with the utmost caution. Few will believe that the object of Childebert's march was solely to avenge his sister's wrongs; but the mention of them by the historian seems to indicate that the invasion was made in reliance upon Catholic support among the subjects of Amalaric himself. The sudden resolution of Childebert (taken probably on the receipt of important intelligence from the country of the Visigoths), the rapid progress and almost uniform success of the Franks, all point to the same conclusion, that the Catholic party in Southern Gaul was in secret understanding with the invaders. Amalaric was defeated and slain in the first encounter, and the whole of his Gallic possessions, with the exception of Septimania, was incorporated without further resistance with the Frankish Empire. The Visigoths, with their wives and children, retired into Spain under their new king Theudis.

Theoderic, King of Austrasia, died in A. D. 534, after having added largely to the Frankish dominions, and was succeeded by his son Theudebert.[2] An attempt on the part of his uncles Childebert and

[1] Greg. Tur. iii. 10. Conf. Chron. Moiss. ad an. 531. (ap. Bouquet, ii. p. 650.).

[2] Greg. Tur. iii. 23.

Clotaire to deprive him of his kingdom and his life was frustrated by the fidelity of his Austrasian subjects. How venial and almost natural such a conspiracy appeared in that age, even to him who was to have been the victim of it, may be inferred from the fact that Theudebert and Childebert became soon afterwards close friends and allies. The latter, having no children, adopted his nephew, whose life he had so lately sought, as the heir to his dominions, and loaded him with the richest presents.[1] In A. D. 537 these two princes made a combined attack upon Clotaire, who was only saved from destruction by the intercession of his mother. That pious princess passed a whole night in prayer at the sepulchre of St. Martin, and Gregory tells us that the result of her devotions — a miraculous shower of enormous hailstones — brought his cruel kinsmen to reason![2]

The Empire of the Franks was soon after extended in a direction in which they had hitherto found an insurmountable barrier to their progress. On the death of Theoderic the Great, or, as he is called in song and legend, "Dietrich of Bern," the sceptre which he had borne with such grace and vigour passed into the hands of an infant and a woman. The young and beautiful Amala-

[1] Greg. Tur. iii. 24.

[2] *Ibid.* 28.: "Ipsi (Theudebert and Childebert) quoque super infectam grandine humum in faciem proruunt, et a lapidibus descendentibus graviter verberantur. Nullum enim illis tegumen emanserat nisi parmæ tantum. . . . Tunc illi, ut diximus, a lapidibus cæsi et humo prostrati, pœnitentiam agebant . . . *Super Chlotacharium vero neque una quidem pluviæ gutta decidit!*"

suintha[1], daughter of Theoderic by the sister of Clovis, and widow of Eutharic, exercised the royal authority in the name of her son Athalaric[2]; and when the latter, prematurely exhausted by vicious habits, followed his mighty grandfather to the grave in A. D. 532[3], she made Theodatus, son of Amalafrida, the sister of Theoderic, her associate in the royal power. The benefit was basely repaid. Theodatus procured the murder of the unhappy

[1] *Cassiodori Vita*, Pars Prima, s. 30.: "Amalasuntha pia imprimis Regina." *Greg. Tur.* iii. 31. (Gregory of Tours gives an account of Amalasuintha entirely different from that of the Greek historian, and, as far as we can judge, equally at variance with the truth): "Hæc autem cum adulta facta esset. . . . relicto matris consilio quæ ei Regis filium providebat servum suum Traguilanem nomine accepit, et cum eo ad civitatem, qua defensari possit aufugit." Gregory then accuses her of poisoning her mother at the Lord's Supper, and adds: "Nos vero Trinitatem in una æqualitate pariter et omnipotentia confitentes etiam si mortiferum, bibamus in nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti, veri atque incorruptibilis Dei, nihil nos vocabit." Indignantes ergo Itali contra hanc mulierem Theodadum Regem Tusciæ invitantes se Regem statuunt. Hic vero cum didicisset quæ meretrix illa commiserat qualiter propter servum quem acceperat in matrem extiterat parricida succenso vehementer balneo eam in eodem cum una puella includi præcepit." The bishop may have been blinded by the fact he mentions, that, "*Erant autem sub Ariana secta viventes.*"

[2] *Procop. Goth.* i. 2.: Ἀμαλασοῦνθα δὲ, ἃ τε τοῦ παιδὸς ἐπίτροπος οὖσα, τὴν ἀρχὴν διῳκεῖτο, ξυνέσεως μὲν καὶ δικαιοσύνης ἐπὶ πλεῖστον ἐλθοῦσα, τῆς δὲ φύσεως ἐς ἄγαν τὸ ἀῤῥενωπὸν ἐνδεικνυμένη. *Cassiod. Chron.* A. D. 526.: "Infantulum adhuc vix decennem." Jornand. Get. c. 59.

[3] *Procop. Goth* i. 3, 4.: Ἐν τούτῳ δὲ Ἀταλάριχος ἐς κραιπάλην ἐμπεπτωκὼς ὅρον οὐκ ἔχουσαν νοσήματι μαρασμοῦ ἥλω. . . . Ὑπὸ τὸν χρόνον τοῦτον Ἀταλάριχος μὲν τῇ νόσῳ καταμαρανθεὶς ἐτελεύτησεν, ὀκτὼ τῇ ἀρχῇ ἐπιβιοὺς ἔτη.

queen to whom he owed his advancement[1], and thus drew down upon himself and his country the vengeance of all who were desirous of dismembering the Empire of the Ostrogoths. Religious animosities, which it had been the policy of the Arian but tolerant Theoderic to sooth by the even-handed justice of his administration, broke forth with destructive fury under his feeble successors. The Roman subjects of Theoderic's empire had not lost the pride, although they had degenerated from the valour, of their ancestors, and had never ceased to think it shame and sin to be ruled by a barbarian monarch, and that monarch, too, a heretic. They would gladly have consented to forget their former jealousies, and to unite themselves with the Eastern Empire, especially when a temporary gleam of life was thrown over its corrupt and dying frame by the vigorous administration of Justinian. But, if it were the will of Heaven that they should yield to a new and more vigorous race, they wished at least to have an orthodox master, who would not merely protect their religious freedom, but agree with their theological opinions. Their choice therefore lay between Justinian and the Franks, who were ever watching their opportunity to turn the errors and divisions of their neighbours to their own account. Justinian was the first to move; and, under

[1] *Marcellin. Chron.* p. 52.: "Quo tempore Theodahadus, rex Gothorum Amalasuentham reginam, creatricem suam de regno pulsam in insula laci Bulcinensis occidit. Cujus mortem Imperator Justinianus ut doluit sic et ultus est."

the pretext of avenging the death of Amalasuintha, he sent his celebrated general Belisarius to attack Theodatus. The Franks beheld with joy the approaching struggle between their two mightiest rivals, and prepared to take the advantageous position of umpires.

Both Justinian and Theodatus were aware that the Franks could turn the scale in favour of either party, and both made the greatest efforts to conciliate their aid. Justinian appealed to their natural enmity against heretics and Goths, but deemed it necessary to quicken their national and theological antipathies by a large present of money, and still larger promises. The Franks received the money and promised the desired assistance the more readily, as they felt themselves aggrieved by the murder of a niece of Clovis.[1] Theodatus, on the other hand, hearing that Belisarius was already on his way to Sicily, endeavoured to ward off the attack of the Franks by offering them the Gothic possessions in Gaul and 2000 pounds' weight of gold. The Franks were dazzled by the splendour of the bribe, but Theodatus died before the bargain was completed.[2] His general Vitisges, who was elected to succeed him, called a council of the chiefs of the Ostrogothic nation, and was strongly urged by them

[1] Procop. Goth. i. 5. 13.

[2] According to one account, Theodatus was put to death by order of his own general and successor on the throne, Vitisges. Jorn. de Regn. succ. p. 241. (ap. Murator. Ital. Rer. i.).

to fulfil the promises of Theodatus, and by sacrificing a portion of the empire to secure the rest. "In all other respects," they said, "we are well prepared; but the Franks, our ancient enemies, are an obstacle in our path."[1] The imminent peril in which Vitisges stood rendered the sacrifice inevitable, and the whole of the Ostrogothic possessions in Gaul which lay between the Rhone, the Alps, and the Mediterranean, as well as that part of Rhætia which Theoderic the Great had given to the Alemanni after their defeat by Clovis, were transferred in full sovereignty to the Franks. The Merovingian kings, regardless of their former promises to Justinian, divided the land and money among themselves and promised their venal but efficient support to the king of Italy. They stipulated, however, out of delicacy to the Greek Emperor, that they should not march in person against Belisarius, but should be allowed to send the subject Burgundians, or at all events to permit them to go.[2] This seasonable reinforcement enabled the Ostrogoths to sack and plunder Milan, in which exploit they received the willing assistance of the Burgundians. In the following year, A. D. 539, Theudebert himself, excited perhaps by the alluring accounts he had heard of the booty taken by his subjects in Italy, marched across the Alps at

[1] *Φράγγοι δὲ ἡμῖν ἐμποδὼν ἵστανται.—Procop. Goth.* i. 13.

[2] *Procop. Goth.* ii. 12.: *Οὐ Φράγγων αὐτῶν ἀλλὰ Βουργουζιώνων, τοῦ μὴ δοκεῖν ἀδικεῖν τὰ βασιλέως πράγματα. Οἱ γὰρ Βουργουνζίωνες ἐθελούσιοί τε καὶ αὐτονόμῳ γνώμῃ οὐ Θευδιβέρτῳ κελεύοντι ἐπακούοντες δῆθεν τῷ λόγῳ ἐστέλλοντο.*

the head of 100,000 men. Vitisges and his Goths had every reason to suppose that Theudebert came to succour *them*, but Belisarius on his part hoped much from the long feud between Goth and Frank. Theudebert determined in his own way to be impartial.[1] He had promised to aid both parties, and he had promised to make war on both; and he kept his word by attacking both, driving them from the field of battle, and plundering their camps with the greatest impartiality. A letter of remonstrance from Belisarius would probably have had little weight in inducing Theudebert to return, as he did soon afterwards, had it not been backed by the murmurs of the Franks themselves, who were suffering from an insufficient supply of food, and had lost nearly one third of their numbers by dysentery.[2]

Though our principal attention will be directed to the actions of the Austrasian king, we may briefly refer in this place to a hostile incursion into Spain, made by Childebert and Clotaire, in A. D. 542. On this occasion the town of Saragossa is represented by Gregory as having been taken, not by the sword and battle-axe of the Franks, but by the holy tunic of St. Vincentius, borne by an army of women, clothed in black mantles, with their hair dishevelled and sprinkled with penitential ashes. The heretical Goths no sooner caught sight of the tunic, and heard the

[1] *Procop. Goth.* ii. 25. Procopius, in speaking of the Franks on this occasion, says: Ἔστι γὰρ ἔθνος τοῦτο τὰ ἐς πίστιν σφαλερώτατον ἀνθρώπων ἁπάντων.

[2] Procop. Goth. ii. 25.

first notes of the holy hymns which were sung by the female besiegers, than they fled in terror from their city, and left it to be plundered by the advancing Franks.

As the object of this invasion was simply predatory, the Franks soon after retired into Gaul with immense booty, and the Goths resumed possession of their devastated country.[1]

While Italy was distracted by war, and with difficulty defending itself from the attacks of Belisarius, Theudebert took possession of several towns which bordered upon Burgundy and Rhætia. Bucelinus, the Duke of Alemannia, who fought in the army of Theudebert, is said by Gregory to have conquered "Lesser Italy,"[2] by which he no doubt meant Liguria and Venetia. These provinces were added to the Frankish dominions, the Ostrogoths only retaining Brescia and Verona.

The cession of territory made to the Franks by Vitisges as described above, was ratified by the Emperor Justinian; and, as a further proof of the growing influence of the Merovingian kings, we may state, that in A. D. 540 they presided at the games which were celebrated in the circus of Arles, and caused coins of gold to be struck, bearing their own image instead of that of the Roman emperor.[3]

[1] Greg. Tur. iii. 29. Ex Adonis Chron. ad an. 542 (ap. Bouquet, ii. p. 667.).

[2] Greg. Tur. iii. 32. Procop. Goth. iii. 33.

[3] Procop. Goth. iii. 33.

It. is about this period that the Bavarians first become known in history as tributaries of the Franks; but at what time they became so is matter of dispute. From the previous silence of the annalists respecting this people, we may perhaps infer that both they and the Suabians remained independent until the fall of the Ostrogothic Empire in Italy. The Gothic dominions were bounded on the north by Rhætia and Noricum; and between these countries and the Thuringians, who lived still further to the north, was the country of the Bavarians and Suabians. Thuringia had long been possessed by the Franks, Rhætia was ceded by Vitisges, King of Italy, and Venetia was conquered by Theudebert. The Bavarians were therefore, at this period, almost entirely surrounded by the Frankish territories, in which position, considering the relative strength of either party, and the aggressive and unscrupulous spirit of the stronger, it was not possible that the weaker should preserve its independence. Whenever they may have first submitted to the yoke, it is certain that at the time of Theudebert's death, or shortly after that event, both Bavarians and Suabians (or Alemannians), had become subjects of the Merovingian kings. And thus, in the middle of the sixth century, and only sixty years from the time when Clovis sallied forth from his petty principality to attack Syagrius, the Frankish kingdom attained to its utmost territorial greatness, and was bounded by the Pyrenees and the Alps on the south, and on the north by the Saxons, more impassable than either.

Theudebert died in A. D. 547[1], and was succeeded by his son Theodebald, a sickly and weak-spirited boy, of whose brief and inglorious reign there is little to relate. He died in A. D. 553, of some disease inherent in his constitution, leaving no children behind him.[2] His kingdom therefore reverted to his great uncles Childebert and Clotaire, the former of whom was a feeble and childless old man, while the latter, to use the language of Agathias, "had only contracted his first wrinkles,"[3] and was blessed with four high-spirited and warlike sons. Under these circumstances, Clotaire considered it safe to claim the *whole* of his deceased nephew's kingdom; and declared that it was useless to divide it with Childebert, whose own possessions must shortly fall to himself and his sons. To strengthen his claims still further, he married Vultetrada, the widow of Theodebald and daughter of Wacho, king of the Longobards. For some reason or other (but hardly from their objection to polygamy, since Clotaire had actually had at least five wives, not all of whom could be dead), the Christian bishops strongly opposed this marriage.[4] It is not improbable that the fear of false

[1] Greg. Tur. iii. 37. Agath. i. p. 15. According to Agathias, Theudebert was killed while hunting; while in the Epitom. Hist. Franc. per Fredeg. c. 46., he died *vexatus a febre.*

[2] Greg. Tur. iv. 9.

[3] *Agathias*, ii. 51. B.: Καὶ οὔπω λίαν ἐγεγηράκει πλὴν ὅσον ἐς πρώτην ῥυτίδα.

[4] Altogether we find mention made of *seven* wives of Clotaire.

doctrine may have influenced them more than the dread of immorality, and that their opposition in this case, as in many subsequent ones, was founded upon the fact that the new queen belonged to an Arian family.

In the same year in which Theodebald died, Clotaire, King of Soissons, was involved in serious hostilities with the Saxons, the only German tribe whom the Franks could neither conquer nor overawe. In A. D. 555, when forced into a battle with the Saxons at Deutz, by the overweening confidence of his followers, who even threatened him with death in case of noncompliance, he received a decisive and bloody defeat, and the Saxons freed themselves from a small tribute, which they had hitherto paid to the Austrasians.[1] The kindred Merovingians never lost an opportunity of injuring one another, and Childebert, taking advantage of his brother's distress, not only urged on the Saxons to repeat their incursions, but harboured and made common cause with Chramnus, the rebellious and exiled son of Clotaire. The war which was thus begun, continued till the death of Childebert in A. D. 558[2], when Clotaire took immediate possession of the kingdom of Paris.

Aregundis, Chunsena (Unsina), Gundeuca, Ingundis, Radegundis, Weldetada, and Ultrogotha.

[1] Greg. Tur. iv. 14. The Saxons refer in this place to a tribute which they had been accustomed to pay to Theoderic and his successors. *Hist. Franc. Epit. per Fred.* c. 51.: "Tanta strages a Saxonibus de Francis facta est ut mirum fuisset."

[2] Greg. Tur. iv. 20.

Chramnus, having lost his powerful ally, was obliged to submit, and appears to have been in some sort forgiven. In a short time, however, he revolted again, and fled for refuge to Chonober, Count of the Britons[1], who, since their voluntary submission to Clovis, had remained in a state of semi-dependence on the Franks. Chonober received him with open arms, and raised an army to support his cause, forgetful, or regardless, of the obedience which he nominally owed to the Frankish king. Conscious of his inability to meet Clotaire in the open field, he proposed to Chramnus that they should attack his father in the night. To this, however, the rebellious son, half repentant perhaps, "*virtute Dei præventus*," would by no means consent. Chonober had gone too far to recede, even had he wished to do so, and on the following morning the two armies engaged.

Clotaire, though cruel and licentious, even for a Merovingian, was evidently a favourite of Gregory of Tours, who represents him as marching to meet his son like another David against another Absalom. "Look down," he prayed, "O Lord, from heaven, and judge my cause, for I am undeservedly suffering wrong at the hands of my son; pass the same judgment as of old between Absalom and his father David." "*Therefore*," continues the historian, "when the armies met, the Count of the Britons turned and fled, and was killed

[1] *Greg. Tur.* iv 20.: "Chramnus autem patri repræsentatur, sed postea infidelis exstitit."

upon the field of battle."[1] Chramnus had prepared vessels to escape by sea; but in the delay occasioned by his desire to save his family he was overtaken by the troops of Clotaire, and, by his father's orders, was burned alive with wife and children.[2]

The perusal of that part of Gregory's great work, from which we are now quoting, affords us another curious insight into the condition of the Christian Church in an age which some are found to look back to as one of peculiar purity and zeal. The historian has related to us in full and precise terms the several enormities of which Clotaire was guilty; how he slew with his own hand the children of his brother, in the presence of the weeping Clothildis[3], and under circumstances of peculiar atrocity; how he forced the wives of murdered kings into a hateful alliance with himself; how he not only put his own son to a cruel death, but extended his infernal malice to the latter's unoffending wife and children.[4] And yet the learned, and, as we have reason to believe, exemplary bishop of the Christian Church, in the very same chapter in which he relates the death of Chramnus, represents the monster as having gained a victory by the special aid of

[1] *Greg. Tur.* iv. 20.: "Confligentibus *igitur* pariter Britannorum Comes terga vertit, ibique et cecidit."

[2] *Ibid.* "Jussit (Chlothacharius) eum cum uxore et filiabus igni consumi; inclusique in tugurio cujusdam pauperculi, Chramnus super scamnum extensus orario suggilatus est; et sic postea super eos incensa casula, cum uxore et filiabus interiit."

[3] Greg. Tur. iii. 18.

[4] Greg. Tur. iv. 9.

God! In the following chapter, he also relates to us the manner in which Clotaire made his peace with heaven before his death.

In the fifty-first year of his reign, he sought the threshold of the blessed Martin of Tours, bringing with him many gifts. Having approached the sepulchre of a certain priest, he made a full confession "of the *acts of negligence* of which he had, *perhaps*, been guilty, and prayed with many groans that the blessed confessor would procure him the mercy of the Lord, and by his intercession obliterate the memory of all that he had done *irrationally*."[1] He died of a fever at Compiegne in A. D. 561.

At the death of Childebert, in A. D. 558, Clotaire had become sole monarch of the Franks and Lord paramount of the several affiliated and dependent states, which, though subject to his military ban, maintained themselves in a great degree of independence of action, and required the constant application of force to keep them to their allegiance. This union of so vast an empire under a single head, the result of acci-

[1] *Greg. Tur.* iv. 21.: "Cunctas actiones quas *fortasse negligenter* egerat replicans." The tenderness of the *fortasse* is inimitable. We may compare with this passage the glowing accounts we read in modern times of the peculiarly holy and happy death of eminent murderers. "*Ea quæ irrationabiliter commiserat.*" Clotaire, who never seems, as was said of our Charles II., to have *done* a good thing, is reported to have *said* one. In the last stage of the sickness which deprived him of life, he cried out: "Vua! quid putatis qualis est ille Rex cœlestis, qui sic tam magnos Reges interficit!" —*Greg. Tur.* i . 21.

dental circumstances conspiring to favour the efforts of personal ambition, was of no long continuance. Its importance to the nation at large was little understood, and the equal claim of all the sons in a family to succeed to the dignity, and share the possessions of the father was, as we have said, founded on the general customs of the nation.

CHAP. IV.

FROM THE DEATH OF CLOTAIRE I., SOLE MONARCH OF THE FRANKS, TO THE DEATH OF BRUNHILDA.

A.D. 561—613.

AT the death of Clotaire, his vast empire was divided among his four sons in such a manner that two of them inherited kingdoms in which the population was chiefly German, and the other two received the states in which the Romance element very greatly predominated. Charibert succeeded to the kingdom of Paris, formerly held by Childebert; Guntram to that of Orleans with Burgundy, the former portion of Chlodomir; Chilperic, who at his father's death had seized the royal treasures and endeavoured to take possession of the whole empire, was compelled to rest satisfied with Soissons; and Sigebert received Austrasia, the least attractive and civilised, but certainly the soundest and most powerful division of the empire. His capital was Rheims or Metz.[1]

The first-mentioned of these princes (Charibert), who is personally remarkable for little else than the

[1] Greg. Tur. iv. 22. Conf. Gesta Reg. Franc. xxix. ap. Bouquet, ii. p. 560. In Hist. Francor. Epit. per Fredeg. c. 55. we have Metz.

number of his wives[1], is interesting to us as the father of Bertha or Adalberga, who married and converted Ethelbert, the King of Kent. Charibert died in A. D. 567; and when his dominions were partitioned among his three brothers, Sigebert received that portion which was most purely German in its population, and thus united all the German provinces under one head.[2] It was agreed on this occasion that Paris, which was rising into great importance, should be held in common by all, but visited by none of the three kings without the consent of the others.

Almost immediately after his accession to the throne of Rheims (or Metz), Sigebert, the most warlike of the three brothers, was obliged to lead his Franks into action with the Avars or Huns, who in A. D. 562 endeavoured to force their way into Gaul.[3] They appear to have ascended by the Danube; but leaving that river, they marched towards the Elbe, and fell with great fury upon Thuringia. It was on the latter river that Sigebert engaged and defeated them. In A. D. 566, they renewed their attacks, and, according to Gregory, deceived the Franks with magic arts and delusive appearances, by

[1] Yet Fortunatus managed to write an ode in his praise, and compared him to his uncle Childebert. Fortun. Carm. vi. 4. (ap. Bouquet, t. ii.).

[2] Greg. Tur. iv. 26.

[3] Greg. Tur. iv. 23. Conf. Hist. Franc. Epit. per Fred. 55., and Gesta Reg. Franc. 30. (ap. Bouquet, t. ii.). Of this originally Asiatic people, the ancestors of the Sclavonians in Europe, we have a lively description in Ammianus Marcellinus, xxxi. 2.

which we may be permitted to understand some kind of military stratagem.[1] Whether by fair means or by foul, the Franks were defeated, and their brave leader fell into the hands of the enemy. He succeeded, however, in purchasing his own freedom and a lasting peace.

Sigebert seems also to have come into conflict with those universal troublers of the peace of Europe, the marauding Danes and Saxons. Reference is made by the poet Fortunatus to a victory gained over this people by Sigebert's general Lupus, who is said to have driven them from the Wupper to the Lahn.[2] The few records we possess of these encounters are, however, far too meagre to afford us the means of watching the struggle with these new and terrible enemies.

Though Sigebert was an active and warlike prince, his name is far less prominent in the succeeding history than that of his queen Brunhilda,—a woman renowned for her beauty, talents, birth, and commanding influence, for the long and successful struggle carried on with her perfidious rival Fredegunda, and no less so for her intrigues, her extraordinary adventures, the cruel insults to which she was subjected at the hands of her enemies, and lastly for her most horrible death. Sigebert sought her hand from an honourable

[1] *Greg. Tur.* iv. 29.: "Ut erat elegans et versutus. . . . . superavit *arte donandi.*"

[2] *Fortunati Carm.* vii. 7.:

"Quæ tibi (Lupo) sit virtus cum prosperitate superna,
Saxonis et Dani gens cito victa probat."

motive, and there was nothing in the auspices which attended her union with him which could have prepared her for a long life of unceasing conflict and suffering, and a painful and ignominious end.

The rude and violent character displayed by so many successive generations of the Merovingian race, the bloody feuds and unbridled licentiousness which disgraced their courts, had caused their alliance to be shunned by the more civilised rulers of the other leading German tribes. The practice of polygamy, common among the Frankish kings, also tended to diminish both the honour and advantage of an alliance with them. Charibert, as we have seen, chose several wives during his brief reign, from among the lowest of his people. The Franks themselves at last became impatient of the disgrace which was brought upon their nation by the low amours of their monarchs and the vulgar brawls of their plebeian consorts. It was from a desire to gratify his people, as well as his own better taste, that Sigebert looked abroad among the families of contemporary sovereigns for a partner worthy of his throne. Having made his choice, he sent ambassadors to the court of Athanagildis, King of the Visigoths in Spain, and demanded his daughter Bruna in marriage. Athanagildis, fearing perhaps the consequences of a refusal, agreed to the proposed alliance, and sent back his daughter to Sigebert, with the ambassadors, whom he loaded with presents for his future son-in-law. The name of the bride was changed to Brunhilda on the occasion of her marriage. The graces of her person, the great and

highly cultivated powers of her mind, are celebrated by all who have occasion to mention her in her earlier years.[1] Gregory of Tours, in particular, speaks of her in glowing terms, describing her as a maiden of elegant accomplishments, of charming aspect, honourable and decorous in her character and manners, wise in counsel, and bland in speech.[2] She belonged indeed to an Arian house, but quickly yielded to the preaching of the Catholic clergy, and the exhortations of her royal spouse.[3] This noble and beautiful woman became one of the leading spirits in an age of intrigue and blood, and is charged by her enemies with having instigated so many murders as to have fulfilled the prophecy of Sibylla: "Bruna shall come from the parts of Spain, before whose face many nations shall perish.[4]"

[1] *Fortunat. Carm.* vi. 2.:

"Clarior ætherea Brunechildes lampade fulgens,
Lumina gemmarum superasti lumine vultus.
Altera nata Venus, regno dotata decoris.

. . . . . .

Lactea cui facies incocta rubore coruscat
Lilia mixta rosis, aurum si intermicet ostro,
Decertata tuis nunquam se vultibus æquant."

Ibid. vi. 3.:

"Pulchra, modesta, decens, solers, grata atque benigna;
Ingenio, vultu, nobilitate potens."

[2] Greg. Tur. iv. 27. Hist. Franc. Epit. per Fred. 57.

[3] *Fortunat. Carm.* vi. 3.: "*Ante* (as an Arian) tamen homini, *nunc* (after her conversion) placet ecce Deo."

[4] *Hist. Franc. Epit. per Fred.* 59.: "Veniet Bruna de partibus Spaniæ, ante cujus conspectum multæ gentes peribunt."

Her equally celebrated rival Fredegunda, the wife of Chilperic, rose to her lofty station from a very different sphere. The great eclat which attended the nuptials of Sigebert excited the emulation of Chilperic, the King of Soissons, who knew his own vile character so little as to suppose that he could live happily with one virtuous and high-born queen. He also sent ambassadors to the Visigothic court, and claimed the hand of Galsuintha, the sister of Brunhilda, solemnly engaging to dismiss his other wives and concubines, and to treat her as became her origin and character.[1] To the great grief of the royal maiden and her mother (for the worthlessness of Chilperic was known), his suit was successful; and the unwilling bride departed, with terrible forebodings and amid the lamentations of her family, to the court of her barbarous husband.[2]

The principal among the concubines of Chilperic, was Fredegunda, a woman of the meanest birth, but fair, ingenious, and skilled in meretricious arts.[3] For a short time she was thrown into the shade by the arrival of the royal bride; but having already

[1] Greg. Tur. iv. 28. Gest. Reg. Franc. 31. *Hist. Franc. Epit. per Fred.*: "Postea transcendens sacramentum, quod Gothorum legatis dederat ne unquam Gachilosoindam de culmine regni degradaret," &c.

[2] The distress occasioned by the bride's departure is well described by Fortunatus, vi. 7.

[3] "Nam ipsa Fredegundis ex familia infima fuit."—*Gest. Franc. Reg.* 31. "Erat autem Fredegundis Regina pulchra et ingeniosa nimis atque adultera."—*Ibid.* 35.

supplanted a former queen of Chilperic's, named Andovera, whose servant she had been, she did not despair of making the lascivious king forget his good intentions and his solemn vows. Galsuintha, who had none of the terrible energy which distinguished her sister, was rendered so unhappy by the persecution of her victorious rival and the open infidelity of her husband, that she begged to be allowed to return to her old home and affectionate parents, offering at the same time to leave behind her the treasures she had brought.[1] The king, who was not prepared for so open an exposure of his perfidy, temporised, and endeavoured to soothe her. Whatever feeble emotions of repentance he may have felt were soon effaced by the suggestion of the fiendish spirit in whose power he was; and after a few days Galsuintha was strangled in her bed, by the command, or at least with the permission, of her husband. That no circumstance of atrocity might be wanting to this transaction, Chilperic publicly married Fredegunda a few days after the murder, to the great scandal of his subjects.[2] This event, which took place about A. D. 567, confirmed and deepened the enmity which already existed between Sigebert and his brother, and kindled in the bosom of

[1] This was the less difficult, as the unhappy Galsuintha was not (as we may fairly conclude from the silence of Gregory on this point) remarkable for personal charms. All that Gregory does say of her is that she was "*ætate senior quam Brunehildis*," — a doubtful advantage.

[2] *Greg. Tur.* iv. 28.: "Rex autem *cum eam mortuam deflesset*, post paucos dies Fredegundem recepit in matrimonio."

Brunhilda that feverish longing for revenge which poisoned her naturally noble nature, and spread its deadly influence over the whole of her subsequent career.

At the time when Austrasia was hard pressed by the invading Huns, Chilperic had embraced the opportunity of seizing Rheims and other towns in the kingdom of Sigebert. The latter, however, no sooner found his hands at liberty, than he attacked and defeated the army of his brother, regained the captured towns, and made Chilperic's own son a prisoner. A hollow truce was then concluded, and the captive prince was restored to his father, enriched with gifts by his placable and generous uncle, who only stipulated that he should not bear arms against his liberator.[1] But Chilperic was one of those natures which know no ties but the bonds of appetite and lust, and was as incapable of acknowledging an obligation as of keeping an oath.[2]

We are told that in consequence of the foul murder of the Visigothic princess and the disgraceful union with the suspected murderess, Chilperic was driven from the throne of Soissons. We may infer from this that the war which began between the brothers, on his restoration, was the result, in part at least, of the enmity of the rival queens. The immediate cause of the renewal of the conflict was an attack

1 "In *quadam* pace manserunt."—*Ex Adon. Chron. ad an.* 567. Greg. Tur. iv. 23.

2 Greg. Tur. iv. 28. Gest. Reg. Franc. 30.

made by Chilperic upon Poitou and Touraine, which had fallen to Sigebert on the death of Charibert. It was a great object with the contending parties to secure the co-operation of Guntram, King of Burgundy, who, though inferior to the others in power, could throw a decisive weight into either scale. The great superiority of the Austrasian army lay in its exclusively German character. Sigebert drew together large forces on the right bank of the Rhine from Suabia, Bavaria, Saxony, and Thuringia, and, evidently mistrusting Guntram, marched to the Seine, and threatened the Burgundians with the whole weight of his resentment should they refuse him a passage through their country. Chilperic on his part pointed out to the King of Burgundy the danger of allowing a "*rude and heathen people*" [1] to enter the civilised and Christian Gaul. So marked had the distinctions between the population of Austrasia and that of the rest of the Frankish Empire become, that they regarded each other as aliens. But if external civilisation was on the side of Neustria and Burgundy, the strength and marrow of the Franks was represented by Sigebert and his Austrasians; and when the latter, *more Germanorum*, asked his perfidious enemy to fix a time and place for the battle, Chilperic sued for peace, and obtained it on condition of surrendering Poitou, Touraine, Limoges, and Quercy. He was also compelled to recall his son Theudebert, whom, in utter disregard of the promise

[1] Greg. Tur. iv. 50.

made to Sigebert, he had sent with an army into Aquitaine.

In A. D. 575 Chilperic, incited as is supposed by the unsleeping malice of Fredegunda, and smarting under his recent loss of territory, determined once more to try the fortune of war against his generous conqueror. On this occasion he succeeded in persuading Guntram into an alliance against Sigebert, whom he called "our enemy." Theudebert was sent with an army across the Loire, while Chilperic himself fell upon Champagne. The King of Burgundy appears to have given little more than his sympathy to the Romano-Gallic cause, and soon saw cogent reasons for concluding a separate peace with the Austrasians. The campaign ended as usual in the entire discomfiture of Chilperic, whose Frankish subjects, tired of following a treacherous and, still worse, an unsuccessful leader, offered the kingdom of Soissons to Sigebert, and actually raised him on the shield, and proclaimed him king at Vitry.[1] The result of this election would appear to show that it was only the work of a party, perhaps the Austrasian or German party, against the wishes of the great mass of the nation. Chilperic in the meantime was closely besieged by Sigebert's troops at Tournai, and everything seemed to threaten his utter downfall, when he was saved by the same bloody hand which had often led him into crime and danger. Fredegunda,

[1] Greg. Tur. iv. 52. Hist. Franc. Epit. per Fred. 71. Gest. Reg. Franc. 32.

maddened at the spectacle of her most hated foes sitting on the throne of her husband, and receiving the homage of those whom she herself had virtually ruled, sent two hired assassins to Vitry. Under the pretence of holding a secret conference with Sigebert, they gained access to his person, and stabbed him in the side with their knives.[1] Thus died the warlike and high-minded King of Austrasia in A. D. 575. It is evident that the Neustrians were not sincere when they offered the crown to Sigebert, and that Fredegunda reckoned on the support at all events of the Gallo-Romans. The daggers of her myrmidons did the work of many victories. No inquiry appears to have been instituted to discover the originators of the crime; and Chilperic and his queen, instead of suffering in public opinion or incurring the vengeance of Sigebert's former friends, appear to have been released by this foul deed from the most imminent peril, and at once to have regained their power.

No sooner had Sigebert fallen under the knives of Fredegunda's assassins than Chilperic despatched messengers to his friends at Paris to secure the persons of Brunhilda and her son and daughter, who were residing at that city. In the consternation and confusion consequent on Sigebert's sudden and unexpected death, no open resistance was offered by Brunhilda's partizans, and she and her whole family were thrown

[1] *Greg. Tur.* iv. 52.: "Cum cultris validis quos vulgo *scramasaxos* vocant." Gest. Reg. Fr. 32. Adon. Chron. ad an. 575. (Bouquet, t. ii.) Conf. Hist. Franc. Epit. per Fred. 93., where the murder is ascribed to Brunhilda!

into close confinement. Childebert, however, the heir to Sigebert's crown, at this time about five years old[1], was saved by the fidelity and vigour of Gundobald, Duke of Campania, who caused him to be let down from the window of his prison in a sack, and escaped with him to Metz, where he was immediately proclaimed king by the Austrasian seigniors.[2] Chilperic himself appeared in Paris soon afterwards, and sent Brunhilda to Rouen and her daughter to Meaux, and kept them both under strict surveillance.

In order still further to improve the opportunity afforded by the removal of Sigebert, Chilperic sent part of his army under Roccolenus against Tours, which was speedily taken; and another division under his son Merovæus against Poitou. The latter expedition terminated in a very unexpected manner.[3] Merovæus was little inclined to carry out any designs of his stepmother, Fredegunda, whom he hated, and least of all to the injury of Brunhilda, to whose extraordinary personal charms and varied accomplishments, to which even bishops were not insensible, his heart had fallen a captive. Instead of executing his father's orders at Poitou, he hastened to Rouen, and offered his hand in marriage to Brunhilda, whose forlorn condition inclined her to accept the homage and as-

[1] *Greg. Tur.* v. 1.: "Vix lustro ætatis uno jam peracto."

[2] *Hist. Franc. Epit. per Fredeg.* 72.: "Childebertus in pera positus per fenestram a puero acceptus est." Gest. Reg. Franc. 32.

[3] Greg. Tur. v. 14. Hist. Franc. Epit. per Fred. 74. Gest. Reg. Franc. 33.

sistance thus proffered from the camp of her enemies.[1] This strange turn of affairs appears greatly to have alarmed Fredegunda and Chilperic, who followed so quickly on the steps of his rebellious son, that the latter had barely time to escape into asylum in the church of St. Martin at Rouen; from which he could not be persuaded to come out until security was granted for his own life and that of Brunhilda.[2] Chilperic, it is said, received them kindly, and invited them to his table. Merovæus was then transferred to Soissons, and carefully guarded; while Brunhilda, whether from a passing emotion of generosity in Chilperic's mind or the fear of Guntram, who had espoused his nephew's cause, was set at liberty and returned to Metz.

Whatever motives led to her liberation, it was not likely to be accepted by Brunhilda as a compensation for the murder of one husband and the imprisonment of another. Her first act after joining her son at Metz was to despatch an army to Soissons, which in the first instance had nearly taken Fredegunda prisoner, but was afterwards defeated by the Neustrians; the latter, in their turn, received a check from the forces of Guntram, and retreated with a loss of 20,000 men.[3]

Merovæus, in the meantime, was shorn of his royal locks and compelled to become a monk. In A. D.

[1] Greg. Tur. v. 2. This marriage was "*contra fas legemque canonicam.*"

[2] Greg. Tur. v. 2, 3.

[3] Greg. Tur. v. 13. Hist. Franc. Epit. per Fredeg. 75.

577, he succeeded in escaping to the court of Brunhilda at Metz; but, though the queen received him gladly, he was compelled by a powerful faction of the Austrasian nobility, who were in close correspondence with Fredegunda, to quit the dominions of Childebert. After various adventures, he is said to have sought death at the hands of a faithful servant, to avoid falling into the power of his own father. Gregory of Tours, though he does not speak decidedly, evidently believes that he was treacherously ensnared by Ægidius, Bishop of Rheims[1], Guntram-Boso, and other bitter enemies of Brunhilda, and murdered at the instigation of Fredegunda.

Nothing in the history of the joint reigns of Sigebert, Chilperic, and Guntram is more astonishing and perplexing to the reader, than the suddenness with which they form and dissolve alliances with one another,—the fickleness of their mutual friendships, and the placability of their enmities. Within the space of ten years we find Guntram and Childebert in league against Chilperic, Chilperic and Childebert against Guntram, and Guntram and Chilperic against Childebert; and the parts were changed more than once in this short period. After a bloody war with his nephew Childebert, the Burgundian king adopts him as heir to all his dominions. After protecting the same nephew and his mother Brunhilda against Fredegunda, the same Guntram defends Fredegunda against Childebert, and stands godfather to her son

[1] Greg. Tur. v. 19., viii. 10.

Clotaire, in utter defiance of the entreaties and threats of his adopted successor. At the death of Chilperic, too, no one wept more bitterly for his loss than his brother Guntram [1], though the greater part of their active manhood had been spent in plundering and laying waste each other's towns and fields. "I am weary," says Gregory of Tours, when speaking of the events which followed the death of Sigebert, "of relating the changeful events of the civil wars that wasted the Frankish nation and kingdoms, and in which, we behold the time predicted by our Lord as the "beginning of sorrows," when "the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child," &c.

Yet it would be wrong to ascribe the internecine wars by which the Frankish Empire was harassed and wasted, solely or even chiefly to the covetousness, ambition, or malice of the brother kings; they were owing in a still greater degree to the intrigues of the rival queens, whose hatred never changed and never slept, —to the endless feuds of the factious seigniors against each other, and their constant endeavours, as individuals and as a class, to make themselves independent of the crown. Similar causes produced similar results in our own history during the wars of the Roses, to which, in their general characteristics, the struggles of which we have now to speak bear no small analogy.

One of the principal objects of Fredegunda in the

1. *Greg. Tur.* vii. 5.: "Comperto autem Guntchramnus Rex de fratris excessu, *amarissime flevit.*"

persecution and murder of Merovæus — though his love for Brunhilda was alone sufficient to rouse her rival's deadliest hatred — was to bring her own children nearer to the throne. This cherished purpose was signally and terribly frustrated. A fatal epidemic which raged in A. D. 580 through nearly the whole of Gaul, after attacking Chilperic himself, carried off both the sons whom Fredegunda had borne to him. The only symptoms of the better feelings of our nature recorded of Fredegunda were called forth, as might be expected, by this event. The death of her children touched the heart and stirred the conscience of this perjured, bloody-minded adulteress, who through life had been steeped in crime to the very lips. She called upon her husband to recognise with her the chastening hand of an offended God. She even sought, by burning the lists of those whom she had marked out as objects for an arbitrary and grinding taxation, to appease the wrath of Heaven. "Often," she said to Chilperic, "has God afflicted us with fevers and other misfortunes, but no amendment on our part has followed. Lo! now we have lost our children! The tears of the poor, the lamentations of the widow, have destroyed them."[1] Her repentance, however, soon gave way before her more habitual feelings. Clovis, the son of Chilperic's first queen or concubine, Andovera, alone remained as heir to the Neustrian throne. Unable to endure the thought that others might cherish hopes which she herself had lost, Frede-

[1] Greg. Tur. v. 35.

gunda accused this prince of having poisoned her children; and having induced the weak and wicked Chilperic to imprison him, she soon afterwards caused him to be murdered, together with Andovera herself.

Guntram of Burgundy, as we have seen, aided in establishing Childebert on his father's throne; and in A. D. 576 checked the victorious advance of Chilperic's troops. But in A. D. 581 the party of Austrasian seigniors which was favourable to the Neustrian alliance, — chiefly in consequence of their enmity to Brunhilda — obtained the upper hand, and induced or forced their young king to ally himself with Chilperic against Burgundy. As the price of this alliance — and he did nothing without being richly paid for it — Chilperic was allowed to take possession of Senlis, Poitou, and Meaux, while Childebert was amused with the shadowy prospect of succeeding to the kingdom of Paris.[1] At the head of the faction above referred to, were Bishop Ægidius, and the Dukes Ursio and Bertefried, the political and personal enemies of Brunhilda.[2] The queen was ably though unsuccessfully supported by Duke Lupus, whose steady attachment to his royal mistress's cause, even to his own destruction, inclines us to give more than usual credit to the eulogies of Fortunatus.[3]

The anarchy into which the state had fallen after the death of Sigebert, the pride and insolence of the

[1] Greg. Tur. vi. 3. 11. [2] Greg. Tur. vi. 3, 4.
[3] Fortunati Carm. vii. 7, 8, 9.

seigniors, and the rancorous feelings with which they regarded Brunhilda are portrayed in vivid colours in the pages of Gregory. "Lupus, Duke of Campania," he says, "had for a long time been persecuted and plundered by his adversaries, especially by the two powerful dukes Ursio and Bertefried, who, determined to take his life, marched against him with an armed band of followers. Brunhilda, being informed of their intentions, and moved with pity by the persecutions to which her faithful adherent was subjected, rushed forth in male attire between the ranks of the enemy, crying out, "Refrain, refrain, from this evil deed, and do not persecute the innocent. Do not, on account of one man, commence a conflict by which the welfare of the country may be destroyed." Ursio insolently answered the temperate words of the mother of his king: "Depart from us, O woman! Be content to have possessed the royal power under your husband. Your son now reigns, and his kingdom is preserved, not by your guardianship, but by *ours*. Retire from us, lest the hoofs of our horses should trample you under foot."[1]

In A. D. 583 Guntram found it necessary to sue for peace, and was obliged, in order to gain it, to leave his brother Chilperic in possession of all the territory he had conquered in the course of the war.[2] In the same year, however, an attempt of the Burgundians

[1] Greg. Tur. vi. 4.

[2] *Greg. Tur.* vi. 22.: "Rex igitur Chilpericus pervasis civitatibus fratris sui, novos Comites ordinat, et cuncta jubet sibi urbium tributa deferri."

to recover that part of Marseilles of which the Austrasians were in possession afforded Ægidius an opportunity of forming a fresh alliance between Childebert and Chilperic[1]; and he himself headed an embassy to the Neustrian court with this object. Chilperic gladly accepted his nephew's overtures, and prepared to attack Guntram. The fortune of war, however, which had hitherto enabled him to make large additions to his own territory at the expense of his kinsmen, now deserted him. He besieged Bourges without success. His general Desiderius was beaten by the Burgundians; and when Chilperic hastened in person to meet his brother in the field, he suffered a reverse which greatly cooled his warlike and predatory ardour. Nor were his allies at all inclined to help him out of his difficulties. The great body of the Austrasians, and a party even among the seigniors, were averse to an alliance with Chilperic and Fredegunda, the real object of which they believed to be the increase of Neustrian — in other words *Roman* — influence in their own government. On the news of Chilperic's discomfiture a violent mutiny broke out in the army of Childebert against the authors of the war, and especially against Ægidius, who narrowly escaped the fury of the soldiers by the fleetness of his horse, leaving one of his slippers on the road in the hurry of his flight.[2]

Brunhilda for the time regained her ascendancy;

1 Greg. Tur. vi. 31. 2 Ibid.

and Chilperic expecting, as a matter of course, to see his late enemy and his late ally unite for his destruction, made great preparations to meet them. The looked for attack was not made, but in the same year Chilperic himself died, or, as Gregory has it, "poured forth his wicked spirit" beneath the hand of an assassin, named Falca, as he was riding through a forest in the neighbourhood of Paris.

Gregory of Tours appears to be ignorant of the instigators and perpetrators of this crime; but, according to a romantic story, the minuteness of which is very suspicious, Chilperic fell a victim to the treachery of her for whose sake he had dared and sinned so much. Among the numerous lovers of Fredegunda was the Major-Domus Laudericus[1], whose intimate relation to his queen was accidentally discovered by Chilperic while on a hunting expedition at Chelles. Fredegunda quieted the fears of her lover by promising to send murderers to attack her husband as he was dismounting from his horse; which was done accordingly.[2]

Brunhilda, very naturally, wished to take the opportunity afforded by Chilperic's death of making reprisals in the enemy's country, and of avenging herself on her implacable and now widowed rival Fredegunda. But Guntram, who had good reasons for desiring that neither Austrasia nor Neustria

[1] *Gest. Reg. Franc.* 35.: "Vir efficax atque strenuus, quem memorata Regina diligebat multum, quia luxuria commiscebatur cum ea."

[2] Greg. Tur. vi. 46. Hist. Franc. Epit. per Fred. 93. Gest. Reg. Franc. 35.

should become too powerful, came forward on this occasion to protect one, whom at another time he had called "the enemy of God and man." Shortly before Chilperic's death (in A. D. 584) Fredegunda had borne a son, whom, though the popular voice assigned him another father, Chilperic appears to have acknowledged as his heir. Her first endeavour therefore was to induce her brother-in-law to act as sponsor to this child, by which she thought that both his legitimacy would be established and his succession to the throne secured. Guntram did actually proceed, in the Christmas of A.D. 585, from Orleans to Paris, to fulfil her wishes in this respect. But, according to Gregory's account, when Guntram was prepared to take part in the ceremony, the child was not forthcoming. Three times was the Burgundian king summoned to be present at the baptism of Clotaire, and three times was he obliged to leave Paris, without seeing his intended godchild; and under these circumstances he thought himself justified in suspecting the infant king's legitimacy. As he uttered in the most public manner his complaints of Fredegunda's conduct, and his unfavourable impressions concerning the child, the queen, in the presence of three bishops, three hundred of the chief men in her kingdom, and probably of the King of Burgundy himself, solemnly swore that Clotaire was the son of Chilperic.[1] Yet Guntram's suspicions were not altogether laid to rest[2], nor was the child baptized before A. D. 591.[3] He immediately, however, assumed

[1] Greg. Tur. viii. 1, 9. [2] Ibid. ix. 20.
[3] Ibid. x. 28.

the office of the young king's guardian and administrator of the kingdom, and occupied Paris with his troops.[1] Childebert, who hastened too late in the same direction, though grievously disappointed at the turn which things had taken, still hoped to induce his uncle to share the spoil that fortune had thrown in their way, and sent an embassy to Paris, which had become the Neustrian capital. He reminded Guntram through these envoys how much they had both suffered from the rapacity of Chilperic, and urged him at least to lend his aid in demanding back all that had been unjustly and violently taken from them. But Fredegunda in the meantime had not been idle. She had disclosed to Guntram the terms of a treaty which had no long time before been made between the seigniors of Childebert and the seigniors of Chilperic for the partition of Burgundy. He knew therefore the degree of confidence which could be placed in his nephew's ambassadors. He was able to display before their astonished eyes the very document which proved them to be traitors to their own master, to himself, and in fact to the whole Merovingian Dynasty. They were dismissed with a decided refusal.

Childebert sent the same persons back again to Paris to demand that "the murderess of his father, uncle, aunt," and others, should be delivered up to him for punishment. To this message Guntram replied with more respect, but still refused compliance; declaring his intention of referring the matter to a

[1] Greg. Tur. vii. 5.

grand council to be held at Paris.[1] In the meantime Clotaire was proclaimed king, probably at Vitry.

The relations between Childebert and his uncle now became unfriendly, and actual hostilities were commenced, which appear to have resulted unfavourably for the former. The council which Guntram had summoned for A. D. 585 was eagerly looked forward to; and when it met, Ægidius, Guntram-Boso, Sigewald and others,—who were now well known to be plotting the downfall of their own sovereign and of the King of Burgundy, and whose real object was to separate them as widely as possible,—appeared as the representatives of Childebert. They demanded, as before, the restoration of the territories which had belonged to Charibert, and the punishment of Fredegunda for her numerous crimes. As both parties had determined on their course beforehand, the discussion between Guntram and the Austrasian envoys soon degenerated into altercation and abuse; and when the latter left the court with threats of vengeance, the enraged king ordered them to be pelted with horse-dung, musty hay, and mud.[2]

[1] Greg. Tur. vii. 6, 7.

[2] *Greg. Tur.* vii. 6, 7. 14. (The provocation given to Guntram was great. The ambassadors had ridiculed him for saying that the father of Gundobald was a miller *and* a woolcomber, and warned him that the axe which had fallen on the heads of his brothers was ready for him): "'Ergo *duos*, ut adseris, patres hic homo habuit, lanarium simul molendinariumque. Absit a te, O Rex, ut tam inculte loquaris!' . . . . Dehinc cum multi solverentur in risu, respondit alius legatorum, dicens, 'Valedicimus tibi, O Rex, nam quia reddere noluisti civitates nepotis tui, scimus salvam

Fredegunda underwent a mock trial on this occasion, and was of course acquitted. Though the suspicions of the whole assembly rested on herself, she was asked to name the person whom she believed to be the murderer of her husband. She fixed on Chilperic's chamberlain Eberulf, out of revenge, as Gregory tells us, because he had refused to live with her. The unhappy man escaped into sanctuary for a time, but was subsequently seized and put to death by order of Guntram.[1]

It became evident at this time to the astute Burgundian, for reasons which we shall proceed to explain, that nothing but a real, hearty, and lasting alliance between himself and Childebert could save them from falling a prey to the machinations of the turbulent and aspiring seigniors.

The period at which we have now arrived is remarkable in Frankish history as that in which the rising Aristocracy began to try its strength against the Monarchy. The royal power of the Merovingians, forced, as will be seen hereafter, into rapid growth by peculiarly favourable circumstances, culminated in the joint reigns of Chilperic, Guntram, and Sigebert. The accumulation of property in the hands of a few, as described in a subsequent chapter, and the consequent loss of independence by the great mass of the poorer freemen, were fatal to the stability of the Merovingian throne. A privileged and powerful

esse securim, quæ fratrum tuorum capitibus est defixa: celerius tuum librabit defixa cerebrum.'"

[1] Greg. Tur. vii. 21. 29.

order of nobility was in process of formation, and was at this time strong enough to wage a doubtful war against both king and people.[1] The latter were on the side of the monarchy; and, had the reins of government remained in able and energetic hands, the loyalty of the commons might have sustained the throne against all the attacks to which it was subjected. The murder of Sigebert had an extraordinary effect on the position of the contending parties, and did much to accelerate the downfall of the successors of Clovis.

The enemies of Sigebert's infant successor were those of his own household,—the great landowners, the dignified clergy, the high officials of the kingdom, who seized the opportunity—afforded by the minority of the crown—of taking the entire administration into their own hands. The chief opponent of their wishes, by whose extraordinary vigour the downfall of the throne was retarded, though not prevented, was the widow of the murdered king, Brunhilda. The misfortunes and sufferings of her checquered life, and the horrible death by which it was closed, were mainly owing to the intense hatred she excited by her opposition to the ambitious designs of the seigniors.

The deeply rooted attachment of the people to the long-haired Salian kings rendered it dangerous for any party, however powerful, to pursue openly their designs against the monarchy; and we find that in all the rebellions which broke out at this period, the

[1] The people hated the seigniors, and frequently rebelled against their tyrannical authority. Greg. Tur. vi. 31.

malcontents were headed by some real or pretended scion of the Merovingian stock. The plan so frequently adopted by aristocracies in their struggle with royalty, of setting up a pretender to the crown, was resorted to during the minority of Sigebert's son, Childebert II., and not without effect.[1] The person fixed on on this occasion was generally known by the name of Gundobald, though King Guntram asserted that his real name was Ballomer, and that he was the son of a miller or a woolcomber.[2] The account which Gregory of Tours gives of him is interesting, and inspires a doubt, to say the least, whether he was not really, as he assumed to be[3], the son of Clotaire I. by one of his numerous mistresses. The historian relates that Gundobald was born in Gaul, and carefully brought up according to the customs of the Merovingian family. His hair was allowed to grow long, as a mark of his royal descent; and, after he had received a liberal education, he was presented by his mother to king Childebert I., with these words: "Behold, here is your nephew, the son of King Clotaire. Since he is hated by his father, do you receive him, for he is your flesh and blood." Childebert, who was childless, received him kindly; but when Clotaire heard of it, he sent for the youth, and declaring that he had "never begotten him,"[4] ordered him to be shorn.

After the death of Clotaire I., Gundobald was pa-

[1] Several such pretenders occur in Frankish history.

[2] Greg. Tur. vii. 14. [3] Ibid. vii. 27. [4] Ibid. vi. 24.

tronised by King Charibert. Sigebert, however, once more cut off his hair, and sent him into custody at Cologne. Escaping from that place, and allowing his hair to grow long again, Gundobald took refuge with the imperial general Narses, who then commanded in Italy. There he married and had children, and went subsequently to Constantinople, where, as it would appear, he was received by the Greek Emperor with every mark of respect and friendship. He was then, according to his own account, invited by Guntram-Boso to come to Gaul, and, having landed at Marseilles, was received by Bishop Theodore and the Patrician Mummolus.[1]

Such was the person fixed on by the mutinous grandees of Austrasia as a tool for the furtherance of their designs against the monarchy. Nor could they have found one better suited to their purpose. It is evident in the first place that he was himself fully persuaded of the justice of his own claims; a conviction which gave him a greater power of inspiring faith in others than the most consummate art. He was entirely dependent on the aid of the rebellious nobles for his chance of success, and would therefore, had he succeeded in effecting his purpose, have been bound by gratitude, as well as forced by circumstances, to consult the interests of those who had raised him to the throne. The fact of his residence at Constantinople, and the sanction of his claims by the Greek Emperor, were not without their

[1] Mummolus appears to have been an able and fortunate general. Greg. Tur. iv. 42. 46.

weight. The prestige of the Roman Empire, as we observed above, had not yet entirely perished, nor had the Franks altogether ceased to look on Rome and Constantinople as the great fountains of power and honour. The nobles indeed intended that no one should really rule but themselves; but as they could not do so in their own names, nothing would better have suited their views than to have a puppet king in nominal allegiance to a weak and distant emperor. Under such circumstances they alone, in the utter decay of the old German freedom and the popular institutions in which it lived, would have become possessors of the substantial power of the empire.

The cause of Gundobald was much aided by the miserable jealousies existing between the different Frankish kings, who, instead of uniting their forces against their common enemy — the rising aristocracy — were eager to employ the pretender as a weapon of annoyance against each other.

Among the chief actors in this conspiracy — though a secret one — was Guntram-Boso, a man whom Gregory quaintly describes as *too much* addicted to perjury [1]; so that he never took an oath to any of his friends which he did not afterwards break. "In other respects," adds the historian, he was "*sane bonus!*" Gundobald relates, with every appearance of probability, that he met with Guntram-Boso while at Constantinople, — that the wily plotter informed

[1] *Greg. Tur.* v. 14.: "Nam ad perjuria nimium præparatus erat, verumtamen nulli amicorum sacramentum dedit, quod non protinus omississet."

him that the race of the Merovingians consisted of only three persons, Guntram of Burgundy, and his two Nephews (Childebert II., and the little son of Chilperic), and invited him to Gaul with the assurance that he was eagerly expected by all the Austrasian magnates. "I gave him," says Gundobald, "magnificent presents, and he swore at twelve holy places that I might safely go to Gaul."[1]

On his arrival at Marseilles in A. D. 582, Gundobald was received by Bishop Theodore, who furnished him with horses, and by the Patrician Mummolus, whose conduct in withdrawing from the Burgundian court, and throwing himself with all his followers and treasures into the fortress of Avignon, had excited the suspicions of King Guntram.

Gundobald joined him in that place, and was there besieged by the very man who had first invited him to Gaul, viz. Guntram-Boso. This double traitor had endeavoured to keep his treachery out of sight, and to stand well with both parties, until fortune should point out the stronger. His namesake Guntram of Burgundy, however, was not deceived, and took an opportunity of seizing Boso on his return from a journey to the court of Childebert. The Burgundian king openly charged him with having invited Gundobald to Gaul, and having gone to Constantinople for that very purpose. It now became necessary for Boso to take a decided part; and, as the king would listen to no mere protestations, he

[1] Greg. Tur. vii. 36.

offered to leave his son as a hostage, and himself to lead an army to attack Mummolus and Gundobald in Avignon. The Pretender and the Patrician, however, defended themselves with so much skill and courage, that Guntram-Boso, with all his now sincere endeavours to storm the town, could make no progress; and the siege was, singularly enough, raised by the troops of king Childebert II.[1]

This extraordinary interference of the youthful King of Austrasia in behalf of a pretender to his own crown, can hardly receive a satisfactory explanation; and the historian Gregory himself throws no light upon the mystery. It is not impossible that the Austrasian magnates, who were almost all more or less interested in the success of the conspiracy, may have blinded both the king and his mother Brunhilda to the real objects of Gundobald; and we see that any one of the royal kinsmen would have gladly aided Gundobald, if they could have been sure that his claims were confined to the throne of his neighbours. The want of common action between the courts became still more evident in the sequel, and, but for the wisdom and vigour of Guntram, would have proved the ruin of the whole royal house.

The murder of Chilperic in A. D. 584 renewed the hopes of Gundobald and his friends, by inflicting upon Neustria the same evils of a minority from which Austrasia had already suffered so severely.

A numerous party, including many of the ablest and boldest of the Austrasian seigniors, were openly

[1] Greg. Tur. vi. 26.

or secretly attached to the Pretender's cause. He had gained possession of Angoulême, Perigord, Toulouse, and Bordeaux; and at Christmas A.D. 584 he was even raised on the shield at Brives (in Correze), and saluted with the royal title.[1] The Burgundian king now plainly saw that not only the throne of Childebert, but the whole Merovingian Dynasty, and even Monarchy itself, were at stake, and that, if the suicidal feud between himself and his nephew continued much longer, the success of the Pretender was by no means an improbable result. His first object, therefore, was to conciliate Childebert, and to lessen the influence which Brunhilda, on the one hand, and the great party of Austrasian nobles, who secretly favoured Gundobald, on the other, had hitherto exercised over his young and inexperienced mind. Fortune threw in Guntram's way the means of accomplishing his purpose. Since the death of Chilperic, and the acquittal of Fredegunda which had so greatly offended Brunhilda and her son, the cause of the Pretender was evidently prospering, and the greater part of the Austrasian seigniors were only waiting for a fair assurance of success to declare themselves openly in his favour. In A.D. 535 Gundobald was in a position to send to Guntram regular ambassadors, furnished, after the Frankish custom, with consecrated rods in token of inviolability, to demand of him a portion of the kingdom of

[1] *Greg. Tur.* vii. 10. (An unfavourable omen was taken from an accident which occurred during this ceremony): "Sed cum tertio cum eodem gyrarent cecidisse fertur, ita ut vix manibus circumstantium sustentari potuisset."

"their common father Clotaire." Should this be refused, they said, "Gundobald will invade these territories with a large army; for all the bravest men in Gaul beyond the Dordogne are in league with him." "And then," added Gundobald, by the mouth of his messengers, "when we meet on the field of battle, will God decide whether I am Clotaire's son or not."[1]

Guntram, who was no less bold than cunning, and by no means scrupulous, put the envoys of Gundobald to the torture, and made them confess in their agony that all the grandees of Childebert's kingdom were in secret understanding with the Pretender, and that Guntram-Boso had gone to Constantinople to invite him into Gaul. Nothing could be more opportune for Guntram's purposes than this confession. He immediately reported it to his nephew, and begged him to come and hear it repeated by the unhappy envoys themselves. Childebert agreed to the proposed meeting, and heard, to his astonishment, the confirmation of his subjects' treachery. With a well-timed generosity, Guntram not only gave up all the points on which he and Childebert had been divided, and restored important possessions to the Austrasian crown, but presented his nephew to the Burgundian people and army, as the future heir of his throne. Placing his spear, one of the ensigns of Frankish royalty, in the hand of the young king, "This," said he, "is a sign that I have delivered my whole kingdom into your hands. Depart hence, and bring all my dominions under your sway, as if they were your own."[2]

[1] Greg. Tur. vii. 32.

[2] Greg. Tur. vii. 33.

In a private conference he gave his nephew sound advice with respect to the choice of counsellors, warning him more particularly against Ægidius, the traitorous bishop of Rheims, and against Brunhilda, his own mother. He also begged him to hold no communication of any kind with Gundobald.

This alliance was felt by the conspirators to be fatal to their cause. Many immediately deserted Gundobald, and those who still remained about his person, the chief of whom were Bishop Sagittarius, Dukes Mummolus and Bladastes, and Waddo the Major-Domus, fled with him to a town called Convenæ, strongly situated on an isolated hill in the Pyrenees.[1] The army of Guntram under Leudegisil, soon attacked the place with newly-constructed military engines, but with so little success, that, after a siege of some weeks, they found it necessary to offer terms to Mummolus and the other leaders, on condition of their betraying Gundobald.[2] To this proposal no objection was raised by the conspirators, who thought only of their own safety. They went to the unhappy Pretender, and advised him to throw himself on his brother's mercy, by whom they assured him he would be well received. Gundobald was not deceived by their specious representations: bursting

[1] St. Bertrand de Comminges.

[2] During the siege, the assailants ascended the hill on which the fortress stood, and reproached Gundobald with the meanness of his origin and his presumption. "Tunc es *pictor* ille, qui tempore Chlotacharii Regis per oratoria, parietes, atque cameras caraxabas. Tunc es ille, quem Ballomerem nomine sæpius Galliarum incolæ vocitabant."— *Greg. Tur.* vii. 36.

into tears, he said, "By your invitation I came into Gaul; but of my treasures, in which there is an immense weight of silver and gold and various costly rings, part is kept at Avignon and part has been stolen by Guntram-Boso. Next to God, I have based all my hopes upon you, and have always expected to reign by your means. If ye have spoken falsely to me now, make up your account with God, for He himself shall judge my cause."[1] Mummolus assured him with an oath that he should take no harm, and persuaded him to leave the city, at the gate of which, he told him, brave men were waiting to receive him. He was then handed over to Ollo, Count of Bourges, and Guntram-Boso, who murdered him in cold blood as he descended the precipitous hill on which the city stood. The besieging army was soon after admitted into the town, the inhabitants were put to the sword, and even the priests were slain at the altars.

Nor did the traitors, who sought their own safety by sacrificing the victim of their arts, escape the punishment they deserved. Guntram paid no attention to the terms of their surrender, or the promise of pardon held out to them, but ordered them all to be put to death. Bishop Sagittarius and Mummolus suffered at once; the others met their fate at a later period.

We have thought it worth while to give a more detailed account of this conspiracy, because it

[1] Greg. Tur. vii. 38.

was one of the most remarkable attempts of the nascent aristocracy to bring the crown into subserviency to themselves — an object in which, at a subsequent period, they fully succeeded. The account, too, of these transactions, as it stands in the pages of Gregory, gives us an insight into the state of society in that turbulent and chaotic period, when the bands of society were loosed, and treachery and violence were resorted to even by those who were engaged to a certain degree on the side of justice and legal authority. The degradation of the Church and its ministers is also brought painfully before us in the history of these times. Priests and bishops are among the conspirators, the perjurors, and the murderers; and so completely lose their sacerdotal character in the eyes both of king and people, that they are condemned to death by the one, and slaughtered at their altars by the other.

For the moment the cause of royalty was triumphant, and Brunhilda was enabled openly to take upon herself the guardianship of her still youthful son, and the administration of his kingdom. The spectacle of a woman reigning — and that woman Brunhilda, the energetic champion of royalty — soon gave rise to a renewal of the struggle in which she was engaged until her death.

Not more than two years after the death of Gundobald, the Austrasian and Neustrian nobles united in a new conspiracy, the object of which was to put Childebert to death, to deprive Guntram of his kingdom, and to place the infant sons of the

former on the vacant thrones of Austrasia and Burgundy. The seigniors sought in fact to hasten that minority of the crown which afterwards occurred, and proved so advantageous to their cause. This fresh attempt was headed by Rauching, Ursio, and Bertefried (of whom we have spoken above), who intended to share the chief authority among themselves, under the pretence of administering the kingdom for the sons of Childebert. The increasing power of Brunhilda, and her well-known desire of revenging the insults she had received at their hands, served to quicken their movements, and drove them prematurely into rebellion.[1] In this case, too, a pretence of hereditary claims was set up, Rauching having given out that he also was a son of Clotaire. But the watchfulness of Guntram, who employed their own treacherous arts against themselves, completely frustrated their designs.[2] As soon as he had received secret intelligence of the plans of the conspirators, he sent a letter of warning to his nephew, who ordered Rauching to be summoned to the court, and had him killed as he left the royal chamber, where he had been received with treacherous kindness. The rebels appointed a new leader, but were unable to make head against Childebert's army. Ursio and Bertefried were defeated and slain; Guntram-Boso

[1] Greg. Tur. ix. 8, 9.

[2] Ægidius having been found guilty of forgery, robbery, and *læsa majestas*, was deprived of his bishopric and sent into exile. The Synod of Bishops did all they could on this occasion to save their erring brother. Greg. Tur. x. 19.

also, who grovelled at the feet of Brunhilda with the most abject entreaties for his life, received at last the reward of his crimes. The house in which he had taken refuge with Magneric, Bishop of Trèves, as set on fire by the order of King Guntram, and as he sought to escape, he was pierced by such a shower of javelins that his body stood erect, supported by the bristling shafts. Ægidius alone contrived to buy impunity for his treason with costly presents.

It was the fear of this new conspiracy of the seigniors that induced Guntram to draw still closer the bonds of amity and common interest which had of late united him to his nephew Childebert. In A. D. 587 they met again at Anlau (Andely, near Chaumont), to which place the young king, who was then seventeen years old, brought his mother Brunhilda, his sister Chlodosuinth, his wife Faileuba, and two sons. After settling the long-pending disputes respecting the territory of Charibert, and other debatable points, the two monarchs and Brunhilda entered into a solemn compact of alliance and friendship.[1]

The rebellious seigniors were for the time completely tamed by these numerous defeats and losses; and both Guntram and Childebert ruled their dominions, and disposed of the great offices of the State, with abso-

[1] *Greg. Tur.* ix. 20. (The treaty (*pactio*) is given in full, and is well worthy of perusal. The preamble contains the name of Brunhilda): "Cum in Christi nomine præcellentissimi domni Guntchramnus et Childebertus Reges, et gloriosissima domna Brunichildis Regina," &c.

lute authority. Summary punishment was inflicted on several of the rebellious seigniors, and especially on Ursio and Bertefried, who had made themselves conspicuous by their rancorous opposition to Brunhilda.[1]

We return from the foregoing digression to the death of Chilperic, who fell, as we have seen, by the hand of an assassin in the forest of Chelles, in A. D. 584.

The Prince who thus miserably ended his life, though enslaved by his passions and unbridled lusts to a faithless and cruel woman, was not altogether wanting in qualities which, if well directed, might have procured for him a more honourable memory. From the ecclesiastical historians, indeed, he meets with little quarter; yet even their strongly biassed account of him shows that he possessed a more original and cultivated intellect than was common among the princes of his time. The bitter denunciations of Gregory of Tours are evidently prompted by personal feelings, which it will not be difficult in some degree to account for. Mild and forgiving as we have found the historian to be in his judgment of monsters like Clovis and Clotaire, we cannot but read with astonishment the unmeasured terms of invective with which he speaks of Chilperic; especially as it was open to him, had he been charitably inclined, to have ascribed the majority of his evil deeds to the influence

[1] Greg. Tur. ix. 12.

of Fredegunda.[1] He calls him "the Nero and Herod of our times," and says that he devastated whole regions with fire and sword, and derived the same pleasure from the misery he caused as Nero from the flames of Rome.[2] "He was given up to gluttony," continues Gregory, "and his god was his belly; yet he maintained that no one was wiser than himself, and composed two books, in which he took the poet Sedulius as his model. His feeble verses accorded with no measure, since, from want of understanding, he put shorts for longs, and longs for shorts. He also wrote other works, as hymns and masses."[3]

The unpopularity of Chilperic among the ecclesiastical historians proceeded not entirely from the cruelty and lasciviousness of his character, but in a greater degree, perhaps, from the fact that he failed in the respect which the clergy exacted from the laity, and that he meddled with theological questions. Gregory himself came several times into direct collision with Chilperic, and certainly did not conceal his displeasure at the conduct and opinions of the king. "Against no one," says Gregory, "did he direct so much ridicule and so many jokes, in his private hours, as the bishops; one of them he called proud, another frivolous, another luxurious — hating nothing so much as the churches. For he frequently said, 'Lo! our treasury remains empty. Lo! our

[1] "Chilpericus magis uxorius quam sævus fuit." — *Ruinart. Præfat. in Greg. Tur.* (ap. Bouquet, ii. p. 115.).

[2] Greg. Tur. vi. 46.

[3] Ibid.

wealth is transferred to the churches. None really reign but the bishops.' "[1]

Contemptuously as the historian speaks of his royal master's prosody, and his other literary labours, it is evident from Gregory's own pages that Chilperic was possessed of considerable erudition for the age in which he lived. Amongst other things, he added four new letters to the alphabet, and gave orders that they should be taught to the children throughout the kingdom, and that all ancient manuscripts should be rewritten in accordance with the new system. When Gregory himself was charged with treason, and of having accused the queen of committing adultery with the Archbishop of Bordeaux, the king addressed the council in such a manner, "that all admired his wisdom and patience."[2]

Chilperic has been compared to Henry VIII. of England, to whom, in many points of his character and life, he certainly bore a very remarkable resemblance. Like Henry, Chilperic, notwithstanding his cruelty, was evidently not unpopular with the great mass of his subjects.[3] The Frankish king had indeed only three wives, and was directly concerned

[1] Greg. Tur. vi. 46. Conf. *Fortunati Carm.* lib. ix. 1.:

"Doctrinæ studio vincis et omne genus,
Regibus æqualis, de carmine major haberis."

[2] *Greg. Tur.* v. 45.: "Addidit autem et litteras litteris nostris, id est ω, sicut Græci habent, æ, the, uui, quarum characteres subscripsimus. Ili sunt ω, ψ, Z, Δ." He gave orders, "ut libri antiquitus scripti, planati pumice rescriberentur."

[3] Greg. Tur. v. 50.

in the death of only one; but, like his English brother, he was eminently lascivious; and no one inferior in personal and mental gifts to Fredegunda, or less deeply versed in meretricious arts, could have retained so long a hold upon his affections. Both kings were sensible to mental as well as sensual pleasures, and desirous of literary fame. Though they lived in the daily violation of God's law and every principle of our Redeemer's religion, they were both extremely concerned about the purity of Christian doctrines, and wrote works in support of their opinions. The theological career of our own king is well known to have been a most successful one. He made himself for the time the fountain of pure doctrine as well as honour, and those who differed from him had the fear of Smithfield before their eyes. It was far otherwise with the Frankish king, who lived in a very different age. Chilperic wrote a work upon the Trinity, from Gregory's description of which it would seem that the king was inclined to the Sabellian heresy. He denied the distinction of persons in the Godhead, and declared that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were the same person. He was naturally desirous of having his doctrines preached throughout his dominions; and after causing his dissertations to be read to Gregory of Tours, he said, "Thus I wish that you and the other teachers of the Church should believe." The bishop, however, on this as on many other occasions, steadily resisted the king, and endeavoured to confute him by argument. The king angrily declared

that he would explain the matter to wiser men, who would, no doubt, agree with him. On which the bishop, with a freedom which is hardly consistent with his description of Chilperic as the Nero and Herod of his age, replied, "It will never be a wise man, but a fool, who is willing to assent to your proposition." A few days afterwards, the king explained his opinions to Salvius, Bishop of Alby, who, so far from giving them a more favourable reception, declared that if he could but lay hands on the paper in which those writings were contained, he would tear them in pieces. "And so," adds the historian, "the king desisted from his intentions."[1]

So powerful, brave, and turbulent a nation as the Franks could not remain long without making their influence felt beyond the limits of their own country; and the state of Italy and the Eastern Empire was eminently favourable to their aggressive tendencies. About three years before the Treaty of Anlau, the Greek emperor, Maurice, being hard pressed in Italy by the Arian Langobards, applied for aid to the Franks, as the most orthodox and powerful of all the German tribes. He knew them too well, however, to rely solely on their theological predilections, and offered them 50,000 solidi if they would cross the Alps and come to his assistance, which they readily promised to do.[2]

There is something very exciting to the imagination in the account of the relation and intercourse

[1] Greg. Tur. v. 45.

[2] Ibid. vi. 42. Paull. Diacon. iii. 17, 21, 22.

between the pompous, formal, verbose, and over-civilised Byzantine emperors—with their high-sounding but unmeaning titles,—and the "rough and ready" kings of the Franks, whose actual power was far greater than its external insignia announced. Childebert addressed the gorgeous but feeble monarch whom he is called upon to save from a kindred tribe of Germans, as "Dominus gloriosus ac semper Augustus." In still loftier style does the Greek emperor speak of himself, in the commencement of his letters, as "Imperator Cæsar Flavius Mauritius Tiberius, Fidelis in Christo, Mansuetus, Maximus, Beneficus, Pacificus, Allemanicus, Gothicus, Anticus, Vandalicus, Erulicus, Gepidicus, Africanus, Felix, Inclitus, Victor ac Triumphator semper Augustus!" while Childebert is simply addressed "Childeberto viro glorioso regi Francorum."[1] Yet the position of these sublime Greek potentates was such that they were compelled to lean for support on a prop they affected to despise. The policy they were pursuing, in thus calling a warlike, ambitious, and unscrupulous people into Italy, was a critical one; but they had sufficient grounds for preferring the alliance of the Franks to that of the Lombards, both in the common Catholicity of the former, and in their distance from the imperial dominions, which made both their friendship and their enmity less dangerous.

In A.D. 584, when he was not above fourteen years of age, Childebert proceeded to perform his

[1] Ap. Du Chesne, Hist. Franc. Scrip. i. Ep. 25.

part in the contract with the Emperor Maurice, and led an army across the Alps with the intention of attacking the Langobards. The latter were no match for the Franks; nor did they imagine themselves to be so. They saw at once that they could only avoid destruction by bending to the storm, and disarming hostility by complete submission. Childebert and his followers were plied with magnificent gifts, to which the Franks, like all half-civilised nations, were peculiarly susceptible; and not only refrained from doing any injury to the Langobards, but contracted a friendly alliance with them.[1] The Emperor Maurice heard, to his astonishment, that the Franks had retired into Gaul without striking a blow, enriched by presents from both parties. Incensed at their treachery, he applied for restitution of the 50,000 solidi paid *in advance* for the expulsion of the Langobards. To this application Childebert returned no answer at all, — a course which, under the circumstances, was perhaps not the worst he could have taken. In the following year, however, the Austrasian king, who was quite impartial in his bad faith, sent word to the emperor, that he was now ready to perform his promise. Accordingly, after a vain attempt to induce his uncle Guntram to take part in the expedition, he advanced alone against his newly-made friends, the Langobards, from whom he had so lately parted in perfect amity. The latter, however, far from giving

[1] Greg. Tur. vi. 42. Hist. Franc. Epit. per Fred. 92.

themselves up to fancied security, had spent the interval in preparing for the attack of their venal and fickle friends. The Franks, on the other hand, had fallen into the error of despising an enemy who had so unresistingly yielded to them in the former year. They advanced with confidence into Italy, hoping, perhaps, to return as before laden with the price of their forbearance—but they were miserably deceived.

On their approach, King Autharis and his Langobards advanced to meet them in good order and with great alacrity, and gave the over-confident Austrasians a bloody and decisive defeat.[1]

A fresh invasion of Italy by the Franks took place in A. D. 590, when Childebert is said to have sent twenty generals at the head of as many divisions of his army. Yet even this great effort, though at first apparently successful, was without any lasting results.[2] After the greater part of the invading force had perished by famine and dysentery, a peace was made through the good offices of King Guntram[3] who had wisely kept himself aloof. In the same year in which this peace was concluded, Autharis, King of the Langobards, died, and was succeeded by Agilulf, whom the nation placed upon the throne on his marriage with the

[1] Greg. Tur. ix. 25. Conf. Paullus Diacon. (iii. 29.), who gives a somewhat different view of these occurrences.

[2] Greg. Tur. x. 3. Paull. Diac. iii. 31. Paullus gives a long list of towns in Italy which were taken and plundered by the Franks.

[3] *Paull. Diac.* iii. 34. Guntram is described as "Rex pacificus, et omni bonitate conspicuus." *Ibid.* iv. 1.: "Quos Brunichildis Regina Francorum ex proprio pretio redemerat."

widowed Queen Theudelinda. The new king lost no time in confirming the treaty which his predecessor had made; and sent ambassadors for that purpose to the Austrasian court; directing them also to restore some captives whom Brunhilda had ransomed with her own money.

A considerable time elapsed before the Franks were again in a condition to carry on a distant war; but their attention was never afterwards wholly withdrawn from Italy—a land whose beauty has in all times roused the lust of conquest. They instinctively felt that it would not be safe to allow that country to fall under the dominion of the Greek emperors, whose traditions prompted them to constant efforts to change their empty titles into the realities of universal empire.

At the death of his uncle Guntram, in April A.D. 593, Childebert succeeded to the kingdom of Burgundy, according to the above-mentioned Treaty of Anlau. This new accession of territory appears to have awakened in him the desire and hope of obtaining the sole sovereignty of the Frankish empire; for we find him almost immediately afterwards attacking his cousin Clotaire II.[1] His attempt to seize the city of Soissons was foiled by the skill and conduct of Fredegunda. A bloody engagement soon afterwards ensued between the two youthful kings, at the head of their respective forces, in which 30,000 men are said to have fallen without any decisive result.

[1] Fredeg. Chron. xiv. (ap. Bouquet, tom. ii.) Paull. Diac. iv. 4.

The last great military event of the reign of Childebert was the defeat and almost complete destruction of the Varni; who, according to some accounts, lived among the Thuringians, but whom Procopius represents as inhabiting the country lying between the Elbe and the Rhine. In A. D. 595 they rebelled against the Franks, and received so terrible a chastisement, that from this time forward they altogether disappear from history.[1]

In the following year Childebert died, at the age of twenty-six, by poison, together with his wife Faileuba. His elder son, Theudebert, though of illegitimate birth, succeeded peaceably to the kingdom of Austrasia; while Theoderic, the younger, who was but nine years old, received Burgundy and some territories hitherto attached to Austrasia, viz., Alsace, the Sundgau (about the sources of the Meuse), the Tulgau (about Toul and Bar le Duc), and part of Champagne, with Orleans as his capital.

And thus, by a singular dispensation of Providence, Brunhilda, the guardian of the infant kings, became once more virtual ruler of the greater part of the Frankish Empire, while Neustria was still under the influence of her implacable enemy and hated rival Fredegunda. Brunhilda took up her residence at Metz, intrusting the administration of Burgundy to her friends.

Under such auspices, it was not likely that the two kingdoms should remain long at peace. Both sides pre-

[1] Fred. Chron. xv. Paull. Diac. iv. 11. Fred. Chron. xvi.

pared for war, and a great battle is said to have been fought at Latofaus (Liffou), which has been variously placed on the Seine in the diocese of Sens, and on the Meuse at Neufchâteau, in the province of Lorraine. The battle was fierce and bloody, and, though not very decisive, appears to have been favourable to the Neustrians.[1] But the hopes of triumph and long-desired vengeance which may have been kindled thereby in the bosom of Fredegunda were now chilled for ever by the hand of death. In A. D. 597, her envious and restless spirit, which through life had been excited and tortured by every violent and wicked passion, was for the first time laid to rest.

Of the beauty, talent, and extraordinary energy of this remarkable woman, there can be no doubt; but if we are to believe one half the stories which her contemporary, Gregory of Tours, relates of her—as it were incidentally, and without any appearance of antipathy or passion—we must ascribe to Fredegunda a character unsurpassed by either sex in the annals of the world for cruelty and baseness.

In such a character, the sins which would consign the generality of women to infamy—incontinence before marriage and tenfold adultery after it—appear but trifling: we are astonished to find a touch even of guilty tenderness in a heart so black and stony. By the sacrifice of her honour to the irregular passions of Chilperic, she rose, if we may call it so, from the obscure position in which she was born, and gained an entrance into the palace.[2] Through the

[1] Fred. Chron. xvii. [2] Ex Adon. Chron. ad an. 567.

blood of the ill-fated Galsuintha, Brunhilda's sister, she waded to the throne. Having induced Chilperic—who, whatever he was to others, was certainly a gracious king and loving husband to her—to murder his royal bride, and publicly marry herself, she was continually at his ear suggesting and urging the commission of the crimes which have branded his name with infamy.

Her whole life, after her elevation to the throne, appears to have been passed in planning and executing murder. We have seen the means by which she succeeded in removing Sigebert from her path; and both Brunhilda and her children were the constant object of her secret machinations. In A. D. 584, when she was at the village of Rueil[1], grieved at the growing power of Brunhilda, "to whom she considered herself superior," she sent a confidential priest to her with instructions to represent himself as a fugitive from the Neustrian court, and, after ingratiating himself with his intended victim, to take an opportunity of killing her. This artful scheme was nearly successful; but the intended assassin was accidentally detected, and dismissed to his patroness with no other punishment than a richly-deserved flagellation. Fredegunda, however, when she heard that his mission had failed, fully made up for the clemency of Brunhilda by ordering his hands and feet to be cut off.[2]

In the following year she renewed her attempts, and

[1] Near the confluence of Seine and Eure. [2] Greg. Tur. vii. 20.

prepared two knives, which she dipped in deadly poison and gave to two priests, with these instructions: "Take these weapons, and go with all possible speed to King Childebert, pretending that you are mendicants: and when you have thrown yourselves at his feet, as if demanding alms, stab him in both his sides, that Brunhilda, whose pride is founded upon him, may at length fall with him and be subordinate to me; but if there is so strong a guard about the boy that you cannot approach him, then kill my enemy herself." Notwithstanding the great promises she made to themselves, should they escape, and to their families if they died in the attempt, the priests "began to tremble, thinking it very difficult to fulfil her commands." Fredegunda then primed them with an intoxicating potion, under the influence of which they promised all that she desired. She also gave them some of the liquor to take with them, directing them to use it just before the commission of the murder.[1]

But it was not merely against what we may call her natural enemies that her murderous arts were directed. We have seen that she was charged with being the murderess of her husband; and though this may be doubtful, yet she certainly compassed the murder of Clovis, her stepson, by inventing the most horrible calumnies against him; and she endeavoured to kill her own daughter Rigunthis, by forcing down the lid

[1] Greg. Tur. viii. 29.

of an iron chest upon her neck.[1] Her mode of settling a dispute, according to Gregory's account, has in it something almost comically cruel. A feud having arisen between two families in Tournai, in consequence of an unfortunate matrimonial alliance, the contending parties were frequently admonished by Fredegunda to desist from their contention and live in concord. When her exhortations proved fruitless, she adopted a more effectual means of pacifying them. "Having invited a great number of persons to a banquet, she caused the three who were principally concerned in the feud to occupy the same couch at the table. When the feast had been prolonged till nightfall, the table was removed, according to the Frankish custom, and the three guests reclined on the seat on which they had been placed. Their servants as well as themselves had drunk to excess, and were sleeping wherever they happened to fall. Three men armed with axes were then placed behind the couch, and the three occupants struck dead by simultaneous blows."[2]

Her last crime appears to have been the murder of Prætextatus, Bishop of Rouen, who, on one occasion, sharply rebuked her for her evil life, and exhorted her to repentance and amendment. The Queen withdrew *felle fervens*, and procured his murder on Easter Sunday, A.D. 590, when he was struck down

[1] Greg. Tur. ix. 34. The enmity between Fredegunda and her daughter is said to have arisen "quia Regunthis adulteria sequebatur!"

[2] Ibid. x. 27.

by an assassin while engaged in the duties of his office. No sooner had he been removed, mortally wounded, to his bed, than Fredegunda came to visit him with hypocritical promises to avenge his death, if she could discover the murderer. But the bishop was not deceived, and when the treacherous queen begged permission to send a skilful physician to his aid, he replied, "God hath already ordered me to be summoned from the world; but thou who art found out to be the principal actor in these evil deeds wilt be accused for ever, and God will visit my blood upon your head." [1]

This daring as well as dreadful deed excited great indignation among the Frankish seigniors; and one of them, who was bold enough to denounce Fredegunda to her face and to threaten her with the consequences, was soon afterwards taken off by poison.

To say that she committed many other murders, which want of opportunity and power alone prevented her from doubling; that she brought false accusations against all who displeased her; that she ground the poor with intolerable taxes; that she attempted the life of her benefactor Guntram, who foolishly and

[1] Greg. Tur. viii. 31. We can now appreciate the fitness of Fortunatus for the post of Poet Laureate. In the following lines he is speaking of Fredegunda: —

"Provida consiliis, sollers, cauta utilis aulæ,
Ingenio pollens, munere larga placens,
Omnibus excellens meritis, Fredegundis opima,
Atque serena suo, fulget ab ore dies."

Fortunat. ix. carm. 1.

wickedly maintained her cause when she was most in need of his assistance—will scarcely add one shade to the blackness of the character we have attempted to portray. A moiety of her crimes would be sufficient to stamp her as the Messalina and the Borgia of her age.

The traitorous faction of Austrasian seigniors, though for the time kept down by the vigour of Brunhilda and the prudence of Guntram, had never ceased from their intrigues, and succeeded at last, in A. D. 599, in persuading the youthful Theudebert to banish his grandmother from his court. The persecuted queen, like another Lear, took refuge with her other grandchild, Theoderic of Burgundy, and was courteously received by him. It is a remarkable fact, and speaks well for the young kings, and still better for the aged Brunhilda, that no breach of friendly intercourse between the two courts took place in consequence of this event.

The unity of the Frankish kings generally showed itself in joint undertakings against their neighbours. Theudebert and Theoderic manifested their mutual affection by attacking their cousin Clotaire, in A. D. 600, with their united forces; and they deprived him[1] of all his dominions with the exception of the country which lies between the Seine, the Isere, and the ocean. They also directed their arms against the Wascones (or Gascons), a Spanish people

[1] After a bloody victory over him at Dormeilles on the Quaine ("super fluvium Aroannam, nec procul a Doromello vico"). Fred. Chron. xx.

living in the Pyrenees, whom the nature of their country and their own love of freedom had enabled to remain independent of the Gothic conquerors. We mention them here because we shall meet with them again in the time of Charlemagne himself, in whose history they play no unimportant part.[1] These expeditions seem to prove that the warlike spirit of Clovis had not yet died out of his descendants, though the physical deterioration of the race had already proceeded to a great length.

Theudebert, who had banished his grandmother, and put his wife Bilichildis to death, that he might marry another woman, is described as being naturally a cruel prince; while the faults of Theoderic are ascribed to the evil counsels and influence of Brunhilda. She is accused of having prevented the young king from marrying, and of encouraging him in a course of vicious indulgences, in order to retain her influence at his court. Whether in consequence of the machinations of Brunhilda, or his own preference for promiscuous concubinage, it is certain that an attempt which the king made to live in lawful wedlock signally failed.[2] In A. D. 607

[1] Fredeg. Chron. xxi.

[2] St. Columban is said to have excited the wrath of Brunhilda by endeavouring to turn the young monarch from his evil ways: "Cumque jam ad viri Dei imperium Regis sermo obtemperaret, et se ab omnibus illicitis segregare sponderet, mentem Brunichildis aviæ, *secunda ut erat Jezebalis*, antiquus anguis adiit, eamque contra virum Dei stimulatam superbiæ aculeo excitat. . . .

he formed an alliance with Hermenberga, daughter of Viteric, king of the Spanish Visigoths, but sent her back into Spain within the year of their marriage despoiled of the treasures she had brought into Gaul. The young king's conduct on this occasion, though quite in accordance with his character and habits, is ascribed to the influence of Brunhilda, who is represented as having purposely rendered Hermenberga odious in the eyes of her husband, that she might retain the position of which a lawful and beloved wife must inevitably deprive her. Without at all intending to exculpate Brunhilda from the sin of ambition and the lust of power (and without power, be it observed, her life would not have been safe for a moment), we confess that we receive with great suspicion all that the works of Fredegar and the other *historici* contain respecting her.[1] No one can read these writers without observing the hostile spirit in which they speak of her, and the satisfaction they derived from minutely detailing all that can redound to her disadvantage. This malevolent spirit is the more remarkable when we compare the passages in which the rival queens are spoken of; for notwithstanding the extraordinary baseness of Fredegunda, she appears to be viewed by the historians with almost an indulgent feeling.

Verebatur enim ne, si abjectis concubinis Reginam aulæ præfecisset, dignitatis atque honoris sui modum amputasset."—*Fredeg. Chron.* XXXVI.

[1] We have already lost the aid of Gregory of Tours, whose work only extends to A.D. 591.

The expulsion of Brunhilda by the King of Austrasia and her favourable reception by his brother was followed, as we have seen, by no immediate breach of their good understanding. Yet directly differences arose between them, they were ascribed to their unfortunate grandmother! Whatever part she may have played in the ensuing tragedy, it is plain that the main cause of their hostility was, as usual, mutual jealousy and covetousness.[1] The ceded territory[2] in Alsace and Lorraine, which Theudebert now wished to reunite to Austrasia, became an apple of discord between the brothers.[3] Theoderic was compelled by a sudden inroad of the Austrasians to yield to their demands in A.D. 610; in revenge for which he spread a report that Theudebert was not the real son of Childebert, but a changeling. He also bought the neutrality of Clotaire, who was not ill-pleased to see his rivals exhausting themselves in their efforts to destroy one another. He then boldly marched into Austrasia, and was met by Theudebert at the head of all his forces in the neighbourhood of Tull (or Toul), not far from Langres in Champagne. Theudebert was defeated in a great battle which ensued, and fled through the Vosges mountains to Cologne. He was quickly followed by his brother, who resolving, in accordance with the advice of Leonisius, Bishop of Mayence, "*beatus et Apostolicus*," to destroy him utterly, led his forces through the forest of Ardennes

[1] Gesta Reg. Franc. xxxviii.
[2] Vide p. 171.
[3] Fredeg. Chron. xxxvii.

and took post at Zülpich.[1] Theudebert, meanwhile, well aware that he could hope nothing even from entire submission, collected his scattered powers, and, having received reinforcements from the Saxon Thuringians, determined to hazard another battle. The conflict was long and doubtful, and bloody beyond the measure even of Frankish contests. Yet we can hardly receive literally the turgid expressions of Fredegar, who relates that the slaughter was so great, that the dying could not fall to the ground, but were propped up in an erect position between the heaps of slain.[2] Theoderic, "*Domino præcedente*," was again victorious; and having taken his brother captive, and stripped him of all the insignia of royalty, sent him to Châlons, where he was shortly afterwards put to death by the order, as some say, of Brunhilda. Merovæus, the infant son of the defeated king, was at the same time dashed to pieces against a rock.[3]

Theoderic now took full possession of Austrasia, and was meditating an attack, with the united forces of his two kingdoms, upon Clotaire, when his further progress was stayed and the aspect of affairs entirely changed, by his sudden decease at Metz, in A.D. 613, in the twenty-sixth year of his age.[4]

[1] "Diligens utilitatem Theodorici, et odiens stultitiam Theudeberti."

[2] Fred. Chron. xxxviii.

[3] Gesta Reg. Franc. xxxviii. Conf. Paull. Diac. an. 612. Dom. Caroling. Genealog. (ap. Monum. German. ed. Pertz, tom. ii p. 310.).

[4] *Fredeg. Chron.* xxxix.: "Profluvio ventris moritur." Chron.

Nothing could be more unpromising for the future peace and strength of the united kingdoms of Austrasia and Burgundy than the circumstances in which they were placed at the death of Theoderic. He left behind him four sons; Sigebert, Childebert, Corvus, and Merovæus, the eldest of whom was born when his father was only fourteen years of age. The power of the seigniors had greatly increased during the late reign, and they now felt themselves strong enough to come boldly forward in resistance to the royal power. The extraordinary prolongation of the regency of Brunhilda, who now began to act as guardian of her *great-grandchildren*, was above all things hateful to the powerful and unscrupulous party, who knew her constancy and energy, and were ever on the watch for an opportunity to feed their vengeance on her ruin. They feared, or pretended to fear, that the young princes were but tools in the hands of the queen for the accomplishment of her own will, and the gratification of her cruelty and pride. They again accused her of purposely undermining the bodily and mental vigour of her youthful charges by making them early acquainted with every enervating vice. The state of anarchy into which the kingdom had gradually been falling was the

Moissiac. ad an. 613. *Dom. Carol. Geneal.* (Monum. Germ. ii. 310.): 'Ipse a Deo percussus." Adon. Chron. (ap. Bouq. ii. p. 669.). The death of Theoderic is here most unreasonably ascribed to the hand of Brunhilda. And, not content with charging her with a murder by which she of all persons would be the greatest loser, the chronicler adds: "*filios ejus Brunichildis occidit.*"

more complete at this period, because, while the power of the Merovingians had been greatly weakened, that of the mayors of the palace was not sufficiently established to ensure the blessing of a strong government, and to make the personal character of the king a matter of small importance. The people at large, indeed, still clung with singular devotion to the Merovingian dynasty; and a long succession of royal weaklings and idiots, designedly paraded before them in all their imbecility, was needed to make them untrue to the house under whose earlier members their vast empire had been acquired, and their military glory spread throughout the world.

The wish of Brunhilda was to place the eldest of Theoderic's sons upon the throne, but the party opposed to her was too strong, and too thoroughly roused into action by the prospect of a continuance of her regency, to allow her a chance of success. She had the mortification too, while she herself was declining in years and strength, of seeing her enemies united under the leadership of the ablest and most influential men in the empire, Bishop Arnulph and Pepin; both of whom held subsequently the office of major-domus.[1] The fear and hatred which Brunhilda inspired among the seigniors were strong enough to overcome the antipathy existing between the Austrasians and Neustrians; and when the Austrasian seigniors found themselves unable to meet Brunhilda in the field with their own dependents alone, they did

[1] Fred. Chron. xl.

not scruple to call upon Clotaire II. for aid, with the promise of making him monarch of the whole Frankish empire. Their objects in these traitorous measures are evident: they hoped, on the one hand, to weaken the monarchy by arraying the different branches of the royal family against each other; and, on the other, to acquire for themselves, under a ruler whose residence was in Neustria, the virtual possession of the government of Austrasia. The strong assurances of support which were made to Clotaire by Arnulph and Pepin, in the name of their party, were sufficient to induce him to lead his army to Andernach on the Rhine; Brunhilda and her great-grandchildren being then at Worms. The aged queen was not deceived as to the real state of things, and knew too well the strength which the invading army derived from the treachery of her own subjects. At first, therefore, she made an appeal to the enemy's forbearance, and sending an embassy to the king at Andernach she besought him to retire from the territory which Theoderic had bequeathed to his children.[1] But Clotaire was equally well informed with herself of the state of the Austrasian army, and was not likely to feel much compunction for the children of one who had threatened to dethrone him. His answer to Brunhilda's message was a significant hint at her want of power to withstand him. "Whatever," he sent word back, "the Franks themselves, by the guidance of God, shall determine upon, I am ready to

[1] Fredeg. Chron. xxxix. and xl.

abide by." The answer was understood, and Brunhilda wasted no more time in negotiations useful only to her enemies. She felt that all was lost but her own indomitable spirit, which neither age, nor the enmity of foes, nor the treachery of friends, were able to subdue. She despatched Werner, the Austrasian Major-Domus, with the young prince Sigebert, across the Rhine, to bring up the Thuringian Germans, in whose courage and fidelity she had reason to confide. But Werner himself had been tampered with, and purposely neglected to fulfil his mission. As a last resource, Brunhilda fled into Burgundy; but there, too, the chief men both of the Church and the laity, were banded together against her; and readily entered into a conspiracy with the traitor Werner for the destruction of the whole royal house of Austrasia.[1] Sigebert, meantime, unconscious perhaps of the falsehood of those in whom he trusted for the protection of his helpless boyhood, advanced with his army against Clotaire, and encountered him between Châlons-sur-Marne and the river Aisne. Many of the Austrasian seigniors were at this time actually in the camp of the enemy, and of those who followed Sigebert multitudes were eager to desert. At the decisive moment, when an attempt was made to lead them into action, the Austrasians turned their backs without striking a blow, and, marching off the field,

[1] *Fred. Chron.* xli.: "Burgundiæ Farones, tam Episcopi quam cæteri Leudes, timentes Brunichildem, et odium in eam habentes—cum Warnachario consilium inientes tractabant, *ut neque unus ex filiis* Theuderici evaderet."

retreated to the Saône, closely followed by Clotaire, who had good reasons for not attacking them. On the river Saône the mutiny in the camp of Sigebert became open and declared. The boy-king and his brothers were delivered up by their own soldiers into the hands of their enemies. Sigebert and Corvus were immediately put to death; Childebert escaped, and disappears from the page of history; while Merovæus, on account of some religious scruples in the mind of Clotaire, who was his godfather, was spared, and educated in a manner befitting his rank.[1]

Nothing, however, was effected in the eyes of the rebellious and now triumphant seigniors, while their hated enemy Brunhilda remained alive. Though she could not at this time have been much less than seventy years old, she was an object of fear as well as hatred to thousands of mail-clad warriors in the full flush of victory. While the tragic fate of the young king was being decided on the banks of the Saône, Brunhilda was at Urba in Burgundy, with her grand-daughter Theodelinda. The defection of Werner and the mutiny of Sigebert's troops had left her without resources, and she was delivered up by the Constable Herpo into the hands of Clotaire and her numerous enemies; who, not content with simply putting her to death, glutted their eyes upon her agonies during three days of cruel torture. She was led round the camp upon a camel, and exposed to the derision of

[1] *Fred. Chron.* xlii.: "Amplectens amore, quod ipsum de sancto excepisset lavacro."

the multitude; and at last being bound hand and foot to a vicious horse, she was left to perish miserably.

We have already remarked upon the extreme difficulty of forming a fair judgment of the character of Brunhilda, arising from the unfavourable bias against her in the minds of the ecclesiastical writers of her day. We must remember that she had incurred the bitter hostility of the great dignitaries of the Church, no less than of the lay seigniors, by her endeavours to check the growth of their inordinate wealth, and to curb their rising spirit of insubordination.[1] The account given by Fredegar of her conflict with Saint Columban, the Irish missionary, conveys to us a very clear idea of the feelings of the clergy towards her; and to offend the clergy, the only chroniclers of that age, was to ensure historical damnation and an infamous immortality.[2] But in

[1] *Montesquieu, Esp. des Lois*, liv. xxxi. ch. i.: "Il arriva que la Cour voulût révoquer les dons qui avoient été faits; cela mit un mécontentement générale dans la Nation, et l'on vit bientôt naître cette Révolution fameuse dans l'histoire de France, dont la première époque fut le spectacle étonnant du supplice de Brunehault." Conf. Fredeg. Chron. xxvii.

[2] St. Columban refused his blessing to Brunhilda's great-grandchildren Sigebert, Childebert, &c.: "Cui Brunichildis ait, 'Regis sunt filii, tu eos benedictione robora.' At ille 'Nequaquam,' inquit, 'istos regalia sceptra suscepturos scias: de lupanaribus emerserunt. Illa furens parvulos abire jussit.'" Fred. Chron. xxxvi. In the Life of Columban, by the Abbot Jonas, the saint is said to have foretold the destruction of Brunhilda and her great-grandchildren, and the accession of Clotaire to both the Frankish kingdoms. After his banishment by Theoderic and Brunhilda, he is said to have been well received by Theudebert, who bid him

Brunhilda's case, the zeal of her enemies outruns their discretion, and the very extravagance of their charges both excites suspicion and furnishes materials for their refutation. Fredegar, in his chronicle, calls her "another Jezebel," and says that Clotaire's inordinate hatred of her arose from her having killed ten Frankish kings and princes. Fortunately for the reputation of the accused, Fredegar has mentioned the names of these ten royal victims; but of these there is not one whose murder has not been ascribed to some other and far more probable agent, by better authorities than Fredegar. "Clotaire," says Montesquieu, "reproached her with the death of ten kings, two of whom he had put to death himself; the death of some others must be charged upon the fate or wickedness of another queen; and the nation which had allowed Fredegunda to die in her bed, and

choose a suitable place for a monastery. Columban fixed on Bregentz, which was at that time inhabited by a Suabian people. Soon after his arrival, while exploring the country, he came upon some of the inhabitants while they were in the act of performing a heathen sacrifice. They had a large vessel which they called *cupa* (kufe) which held about twenty pailsfull, filled with beer, standing in the midst of them. In reply to Columban's question what they going to do with it, they replied that they were going to sacrifice to Wodan (whom some call Mercury). When the Saint heard of this horrible work he blew on the cask, and, lo! it was loosed, and flew into pieces with a loud noise, so that all the beer ran out. This made it evident that the Devil was in the cask, who wished to ensnare the souls of the sacrificers [illegible] earthly drinks. When the heathens saw this they were [illegible]shed, and said that Columban had a strong breath to burst a [illegible]ngly bound cask. But he rebuked them in the words of the Gospel, and bid them go home.

opposed the punishment of her flagrant crimes, should have beheld with the greatest calmness the sins of a Brunhilda." [1]

Amidst such palpable misrepresentations, it is difficult to know what to believe, and hazardous to fix upon her any of the specific crimes with which she has been charged. To say that she was guilty of intrigue and violence is to say that she lived and struggled in an age and in a court where these were the only means of self-preservation. We see that she was ambitious, and crime was at that period more peculiarly the companion and assessor of power. Her desire of vengeance was roused at the very commencement of her career by injuries which only a saint could have forgiven. She had to struggle through her whole life with antagonists who beset her path with the dagger and the poison cup, and against whom she could not possibly have held her ground without sometimes turning their own detestable weapons against themselves. That she committed many crimes, therefore, which nothing can justify, though the circumstances of her life may in some degree palliate them, we cannot reasonably doubt. Yet even through the dark veil which hostile chroniclers have thrown over the character of Brunhilda, many traces may be discerned of what is noble, generous, and even tender, in her disposition. Nor can we, while we read her history, suppress the thought, that she who died a death

[1] Montesq. Esp. des Lois, xxxi. 1.

of torture amidst exulting foes, had that within her which in better times would have made her the ornament and the blessing of the country over which she ruled, and ensured her a niche in the vast catacombs of history among the wise, the great, and good.[1]

It is evident from the fact that the greatest possible publicity was given to the horrid spectacle of Brunhilda's execution, that the hatred against her was not only intense but general; for otherwise her enemies would not have run the risk of exciting the sympathy of the multitude in her nameless sufferings. And yet she would seem to have had all the qualities calculated to excite the enthusiastic partiality of subjects towards their rulers. She was the daughter, sister, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother of kings; and had, moreover, beauty and intellect enough to raise a peasant to a throne. Her indomitable courage, her ceaseless activity, and extraordinary skill in the conduct of affairs, enabled her to carry on with wonderful success a conflict with the powerful seigniors, and to postpone for many years the downfall of the monarchy. Her mental and personal graces attracted the attention and admiration of Pope Gregory the Great, who praises her for her Christian devotion, uprightness of heart,

[1] *Fredeg. Chron.* xlii.: "Per triduum eam diversis tormentis adfectam, jubet prius camelo per omnem exercitum sedentem perducere; posthæc coma capitis, uno pede et brachio ad vitiocissi ni equi caudam ligare; ibique calcibus et velocitate cursus membratim disrumpitur." Montesquieu, Esprit des Lois, iii. p. 302.

skill in government, and the careful education she bestowed upon her children.[1] That the unhappy circumstances in which her life was passed had not

[1] *Greg. Mag.* (Op. om. Paris, 1705), vi. ep. 5.; "Excellentiæ vestræ prædicandam et Deo placitam bonitatem, et gubernacula testantur, et educatio filii manifestat. Cui non solum incolumem rerum temporalium gloriam provida sollicitudine conservastis, verum etiam æternæ vitæ præmia providistis, dum mentem ipsius in radice veræ fidei, materna, ut decuit, et laudabili institutione plantastis."

Conf. vi. 50. and 59., in which latter Gregory commends Augustine, then on his way to England, to the notice of Brunhilda. Also ix. epist. 11. 109. 117.: "Dum turbas gentium laudabiliter gubernatis." And xi. 62., in which he says: "Gratias omnipotenti Deo referimus qui . . . ita vos amore Christianæ Religionis implevit, ut quidquid ad animarum lucrum, quidquid ad propagationem fidei pertinere cognoscitis, devota mente et pio operari studio non cessetis. Quanto autem favore, quantaque opitulatione excellentia vestra reverendissimum fratrem et Coepiscopum nostrum Augustinum proficiscentem ad Anglorum gentem adjuverit, nec ante silentio fama conticuit, et postea quidam ab eo ad nos Monachi redeuntes subtiliter retulerunt. Et quidem hæc de Christianitate vestra mirentur alii, quibus adhuc beneficia vestra minus sunt cognita; nam nobis, quibus experimentis jam nota sunt, non mirandum est, sed gaudendum, &c." Conf. ix. ep. 11.

Ibid. epist. xi. 63.: "Illud etiam cunctis patenter insinuat, quia et effera corda gentilium providi gubernatis arte consilii, et regiam quod majoris adhuc laudis est, ornatis sapientia potestatem."

Ibid. epist. xiii. 6.: "Inter alia bona hoc apud vos præ cæteris tenet principatum, quod in mediis hujus mundi fluctibus, qui regentis animos turbulenta solent vexatione confundere, ita cor ad divini cultus amorem et venerabilium locorum disponendam quietem reducitis, ac si nulla vos alia cura sollicitet. Unde . . . præ aliis gentibus gentem Francorum asserimus felicem, quæ sic bonis omnibus præditam meruit habere Reginam." Germani Parisiorum Episc. Epist. ad Brunechildem R. Du Chesne, i. p. 855.

excluded the feeling of mercy from her heart she proved by ransoming at her own expense some Longobardian prisoners, and still more by dismissing unhurt the wretched priest who was sent to betray and murder her. At a time when intrigue and plunder occupied the thoughts of all around her, she turned her attention to the erection of public works, which have been pronounced worthy of a Roman edile or proconsul; and yet thousands of her own countrymen rejoiced to see her torn limb from limb, and could not satisfy their rage until they had burned her lacerated body, and scattered her ashes to the dust!

CHAP. V.

FROM THE DEATH OF BRUNHILDA TO THE DEATH OF CARL MARTEL.

A.D. 613—741.

AND thus, after a long series of rebellions, the rising aristocracy gained their first great victory over the monarchy; we say the monarchy, for in the battle which made him king of the whole Frankish empire no one was more truly defeated than the nominal victor, Clotaire II. himself. He was, in fact, an instrument in the hands of the seigniors for the humiliation of the royal power. It was not because Neustria was stronger than Austrasia and Burgundy, that the Neustrian king obtained a triple crown; but because the power of the seigniors was greater than that of the infant kings and their female guardian.

The chief advantage of every victory naturally falls to the leaders of the victorious party; and we find that on this occasion the mayors of the palace were the principal gainers by the change which had taken place. Clotaire II. soon learned that

the support he had received was sold, not given; and that, though he was the ruler of the united Frankish empire, his position differed from, and was far less commanding than, that of Clovis or the first Clotaire. No sooner was the kingdom of Burgundy transferred to him, than Werner, the major-domus of that country, demanded, as the price of his treachery, that he should be confirmed in his mayoralty, and that Clotaire should bind himself *by oath* never to degrade him from that office.[1] Arnulph and Pepin[2], the leaders of the revolution in Austrasia, were rewarded in a similar manner, and exercised all the substantial power of kings under the humble names of mayors of the palace. It was fortunate for the latter country, and indeed for the whole empire, that at such a crisis the reins of government had fallen into such able hands. The singular concord which existed between Arnulph and Pepin,—who are peculiarly interesting to us as the progenitors of the Carlovingian race,—affords us evidence that they were actuated by patriotism as well as ambition. Yet they felt their power, and both used and endeavoured to increase it. Anxious for the substance rather than the external trappings of authority, they wisely sought a nominal head, under the shadow of whose name they might be less exposed to the shafts of envy. It was with this view that they advised Clotaire to grant the greater

[1] Fredeg. Chron. xliii.

[2] Called Pepin of Landen (Landres).

portion of Austrasia during his own lifetime to Dagobert, his son by Queen Beretrudis, with the understanding that they should administer the kingdom for him.[1]

If we could feel any doubts as to the nature and objects of the revolution effected at this period, the edicts published by Clotaire would be sufficient to dispel them. In many respects the provisions contained in these documents resemble those of our own *Magna Charta*.[2] Their principal object is to protect the rich and powerful seigniors, both lay and clerical, from the arbitrary power of the king, and to establish them in the full possession of all the rights they had usurped, during the dark and troubled period of which we have been speaking. It is in such periods that a few grow great by the depression of the many, and it was from the union of the few, for mutual protection, that those formidable aristocracies of Europe arose which often proved strong enough to control in turn both king and people.

The Frankish empire, though at this time nominally reunited under one head, was in reality governed by four virtually independent rulers, of whom Clotaire himself was not the most important.

[1] *Fredeg. Chron.* xlvii.: "Dagobertum . . . . super Austrasios regem instituit, retinens sibi quod Ardenna et Vosagus versus Neuster et Burgundiam excludebant." Erchanberti Fragm. ad an. 622. (ap. Bouquet, ii. p. 690.), where Pepin is said to have been appointed Major-Domus et *Pædagogus*.

[2] Baluz. Capit. Reg. Franc. (Paris, 1677. fol.), for Laws of Clotaire II.

Werner, as we have seen, was made Major-Domus of Burgundy for life; and as such was both administrator of the royal *fiscus* and generalissimo of the army. Austrasia was governed by Arnulph and Pepin in the name of Dagobert; and even in Neustria, the original portion of Clotaire, and that in which he had the greatest personal influence, there was a major-domus, on whom the weight of government principally rested.

During the minority of Dagobert, Austrasia flourished under the wise administration of his two guardians, who pursued the same object — the welfare of the country — with a wonderful unanimity. "Even the nations," says Fredegar, "on the borders of the Avars (Huns) and the Slaves" sought the aid of the Austrasian mayors against their savage neighbours.[1] It is not wonderful, therefore, that Dagobert, or rather his advisers, should wish to extend their rule, and to recover that portion of Austrasia which Clotaire had retained, when, by the advice of the great seigniors, he had set apart a kingdom for his son. Dagobert, when summoned by his father to Clichy[2] to marry Gomatrudis, the sister of Clotaire's second queen Sichildis, took the opportunity of claiming those provinces which had belonged to the Austrasian kingdom. On his father's refusal, a

[1] *Fredeg. Chron.* lviii.: "... consilio primitus beatissimi Arnulfi, Mettensis urbis Pontificis, et Pippini, Majoris Domus, usus, tanta prosperitate regale regimen in Auster regebat (Dagobertus) ut a cunctis gentibus immenso ordine laudem haberet."

[2] A royal residence near Paris.

violent dispute arose between them, and the manner in which it was decided is another proof of the extraordinary power to which the new aristocracy had attained. The question was referred to twelve of the Frankish seigniors, among whom was Arnulph himself, the Bishop of Metz.[1] The decision, as might have been foreseen, was in favour of Dagobert, who regained the Vosges and Ardennes in the Netherlands; nor did Clotaire consider it prudent to oppose the change. The additional strength thus given to the German portion of the empire was in some degree counterbalanced by the stricter union of Burgundy and Neustria, (in both of which the Romance element predominated,) consequent upon the death of Werner. By some temporary change in favour of the monarchy, the exact nature of which it is difficult to ascertain, but which may have been the result of Werner's government, the Burgundian people, or rather the seigniors, consented to forego the right they had usurped, of choosing another mayor, and remained for a time more immediately under the government of the king.[2]

In A.D. 628, about two years after the re-arrangement of territory by the twelve umpires, as above described, Clotaire II. died, having reigned for nearly half a century. He left behind him another son, Charibert[3], by an unknown mother;

[1] Fred. Chron. liii.

[2] *Fred. Chron.* liv.: "Omnes unanimiter denegantes se nequaquam velle Majorem Domus eligere."

[3] According to the Gesta Dagoberti, c. v. (ap. Bouq. ii. p.

but Dagobert aspired to reign alone, and summoned his warlike Austrasians to the field. The Burgundians, without a head, had little motive to resistance; nor do the Neustrians seem to have interested themselves in favour of Charibert, for they quickly paid their homage to King Dagobert at Soissons. The unfortunate Charibert, however, found a friend in his uncle Brodulf, who endeavoured to influence the king in favour of his brother; and Dagobert, having obtained all that he aimed at without resistance, was induced to resign a portion of his vast dominions. "Moved with pity," says the chronicler, "and following the counsel of the wise, he gave up to Charibert the territory which lies between the boundaries of the Visigoths and the river Loire (or Garonne?)."[1] Nor had Dagobert any occasion to repent his generosity; Charibert, after extending his boundaries to the south at the expense of the Gascons, died in A.D. 631, leaving his brother in undisputed possession of the whole empire.

The influences to which Dagobert had hitherto been subjected were favourable both to virtue and good government. He had lived chiefly among the German Franks, whose habits and manners, though rough and even coarse, were far less corrupt than

581.), Charibert was the son of Sichildis, Clotaire's second wife, in which case he could not have been more than nine years old when his father died (A.D. 628). But Charibert died three years after his father (A.D. 631), leaving one, or, as some say, three sons! Fred. Chron. lvi.

[1] *Fred. Chron.* lvii.: "Citra Ligerem et limitem Spaniæ."

those of the Gallo-Romans of Neustria and Burgundy. He had enjoyed the society and counsel of the two wisest, most energetic, and honourable men of the day, Arnulph[1] and Pepin; by whose skilful measures, and commanding influence in Church and State, he was firmly supported on the throne. If we may trust to the panegyrics of the chroniclers, respecting one who was "*ditator supra modum largissimus*" of the churches, the clergy, and the poor, Dagobert was not unworthy of the care bestowed upon him. He is represented as unwearied in his efforts for the happiness of his subjects, who were prosperous and grateful. Unfortunately, however, he was one of those whose character is at the mercy of immediately surrounding influences. From the wise and good he readily imbibed sentiments of honour and wisdom, but he was no less sensibly alive to the attractions of evil example and the allurements of vicious pleasure. On the death of Clotaire he removed the seat of his government to Paris, a city which, in a greater degree than any other, bore the distinguishing marks of a bastard Roman civilisation. The Neustrians, jealous of the Austrasians, whom they regarded as barbarians with mingled contempt and fear, exerted all their arts to captivate the affections of the young monarch, and to eradicate his German nationality.[2] The first sign of their success was the dismissal, or rather abandonment, by

[1] Vid. Paull. Diacon. de Gest. Langob. vi. c. 16.

[2] Fredeg. Chron. lx. Gesta Dagoberti, xxii.

the king of his queen Gomatrudis, whom he left at Reuilly[1] in the neighbourhood of Paris, and raised her servant Nanthildis to the throne. And now the artificial calmness of the royal mind, which had but reflected the purity and wisdom of noble associates, was quickly ruffled by a storm of ungovernable desires and passions. Nanthildis did not long maintain herself in the elevation from which she had thrust another. "Abandoned," says Fredegar, "to immoderate luxury, like Solomon, Dagobert had three wives at one time, and a very great number of concubines." The names of the contemporary queens were Nanthildis, Wulfegandis, and Berchildis; the concubines were so numerous that the chronicler declines to name them. The extravagant expenditure, rendered necessary by his new mode of life, was supplied by arbitrary exactions and imposts, which alienated the affections both of those who suffered, and those who feared to suffer. Pepin, a man "prudent in all things, full of good counsel and honour, and esteemed by all for the love of justice which he had instilled into the mind of Dagobert," saw and deplored, but could not prevent, the change.[2] His very virtues, for which his royal pupil had once valued and loved him, were now regarded with dislike, as a tacit reproof on the immoderate self-indulgence of the king. Dagobert sought and found in Æga a minister better suited to his altered heart and

[1] Now the Faubourg St. Antoine in Paris.
[2] Fredeg. Chron. lxi.

life; and Pepin, who had first placed Dagobert on the throne, was for a time in personal danger from those who hated his virtues, and feared his ability and influence. "But the love of justice, and the fear of God, to whom he cleaved with steadfast heart, delivered him from all his troubles."

It was in this adverse position of affairs, when the king was sunk in sensual luxury, and the people were murmuring at the ever increasing burdens which his folly and extravagance laid upon them, that the Franks became involved in a war with the Slavonic tribes on the eastern boundaries of the empire. The exact limits which divided the rude nations of antiquity (whose treaties, where they existed, were expressed in the most vague and general terms) can never be defined with any great degree of certainty. After the fall of the Thuringian kingdom, which had formed a barrier to their progress westward, the Slaves, formerly known by the name of Sarmatians, commenced a migration across the Elbe, and gradually spread themselves as far as the river Saale in Thuringia. In the beginning of the sixth century Bohemia was in possession of a tribe of Slaves called Czechs, who by the middle of the seventh century had occupied the country between the Culpa and the Mur, and extended themselves westward beyond the river Salza. A portion of these, under the name of Wends, who lived on the Baltic, retained their independence until a later period; those who occupied central Germany, between the Elbe and Saale, and were called Sorbs,

were tributary to the Franks; while the Slaves (in the narrower sense of the word) of Bohemia, and on the north-west boundary of the Frankish empire, groaned beneath the intolerable tyranny of the Avars or Huns. This latter people lived among their more industrious and civilised subjects like freebooters; never fixing their residence in any one place, but roving to and fro, and compelling those among whom they happened to be to support them in idleness, and even to place their wives and daughters at their absolute disposal. In war the Slaves are said to have been placed in the van of the battle, while their masters abstained from fighting until they saw their subjects defeated.[1] Such intolerable oppression would have roused resistance even from the most timid; the subject Slaves continually rebelled, and their independent kinsmen, the Baltic Wends, were obliged to wage incessant wars for the maintenance of their freedom. The efforts of the former had been hitherto entirely unavailing, and had had no other result than that of fixing the yoke more firmly on their necks. But the time of their deliverance came at last. During the reigns of Clotaire and Dagobert a revolution took place among the Slavonian tribes, the exact nature of which cannot be ascertained from the confused and meagre accounts of the chroniclers. All that we can gather with any degree of certainty is, that the Slaves and Wends succeeded in freeing themselves from their rapacious

[1] Fredeg. Chron. xlviii.

and insolent lords, and in establishing an independent kingdom; and that they came at this period into collision with the Franks on their respective borders. According to Fredegar, the Slavonic peoples owed their deliverance chiefly to a Frank of obscure origin, named Samo, who, when travelling (about A.D. 624) among the Slaves or Wends for the sake of commerce, found this people, and more especially the sons of the Huns by the Wendish women, in a state of open rebellion. Like our own glorious Clive in later times, he abandoned his commercial career for the more congenial pursuits of war and conquest; and having joined the Slaves, he soon enabled them by his skill and valour to defeat the Avars or Huns in a bloody and decisive battle. So sensible were the liberated Slaves of what they owed to Samo, and so grateful for his timely and voluntary service, that they unanimously elected him as their king, and remained faithful in their allegiance to him for a space of six and thirty years.

In A.D. 631, as Fredegar and others relate, some Frankish merchants were plundered and killed in the territory of Samo by some of his subjects. Dagobert immediately sent an ambassador, named Sicharius, to demand reparation; but Samo appears never to have admitted him to an audience. At last, however, Sicharius managed to get into the royal presence, by disguising himself and his attendants in the Slavonic dress, and he then delivered the message entrusted to him. Samo replied, and no doubt with truth, that injuries had been inflicted by both parties, and that many cases

of the same kind must be inquired into, that mutual satisfaction might be given. This answer, though dignified and fair, was not what Sicharius expected to hear, and, losing the command of his temper, he began, "like a foolish ambassador, to utter words which were not contained in his instructions." Amongst other things he said that both Samo and his subjects owed allegiance and service to the Frankish monarch; to which the King of the Slaves replied with calmness, "And the territory which we possess shall be Dagobert's, and we will be his people, if he is disposed to be at peace with us." This soft answer did not turn away the wrath of the emissary, who was very probably directed to promote the misunderstanding; and he insultingly replied that it was not possible for Christians, the servants of God, to contract an alliance with dogs. "If," said Samo, with dignified sarcasm, "ye are the servants of God, and we his dogs, so long as ye act against Him we have received permission to tear you." [1]

On the return of his ambassadors, who had suffered so palpable a defeat in the preliminary war of words, Dagobert summoned his Austrasian troops and sent them against the Slaves in full assurance of success. Ariwald, King of the Longobards, sent an auxiliary force from Italy to serve with the Franks, who were also joined by the Alemannian or Swabian contingent, and were at first successful. But when the Austrasians were led up to attack a strong place called

[1] Fredeg. Chron. lxviii.

Wogatisburc[1], where a large army of Wends had been drawn together, they were miserably defeated and put to flight. This unexpected issue of the contest, is attributed by the chroniclers to the ill-will of the Austrasians, who went into the fight without any hearty zeal, on account of their dislike of Dagobert, and their jealousy of the Neustrians, with whom the king had so much identified himself. That the victory, however gained, was real and substantial, is evident from the fact that Derwan, Prince of the Sorbs, who had been in some degree subject to the Franks, transferred his homage to King Samo.

In the following year, A. D. 632, Dagobert again led an army from Metz to Mayence on the Rhine, with the intention of attacking the Wendish Slaves, but this expedition was abandoned without any apparent cause; unless we can believe that Dagobert, at the head of a formidable army, retired from the country without striking a blow, because ambassadors from the Saxons came to offer their assistance on condition of being excused from paying *their yearly tribute of five hundred cows!*[2]

The true reason of these repeated failures is to be sought in the disaffection of the Austrasian seigniors, who were not inclined to shed their blood in company with Neustrians, for one whom they now regarded exclusively in the light of a Neustrian King. The change from the dignified and advantageous position

[1] Which most writers have sought among the Alps, while others consider it to be Voitsberg in Steiermark.

[2] Fred. Chron. lxxiv.

which they had occupied under the able administration of the chiefs of their own order, Pepin and Arnulph, to that of distant and little regarded subjects of a monarch who spent his life at Paris, was more than their proud and ambitious spirits could endure. They obeyed the royal ban unwillingly, when summoned to the field; they defended even their own territory in Thuringia with sullen feebleness; and the Slaves made continual accessions to their territory at the expense of the Frankish empire. The eyes of Dagobert or his advisers were at last forced open to the real condition of affairs, and to the danger which threatened them from the east. They saw that the Austrasian seigniors were determined to be ruled by their own order, though they still preferred to do so in the name of a Merovingian king. To disregard their wishes was to risk, not only the loss of Thuringia, but the dismemberment of the empire. In A.D. 632 therefore, just after the lesson he had received in the abortive expedition above described, Dagobert summoned the grandees of his empire both temporal and spiritual to Metz; and there, with the general consent of his council, appointed the infant Sigebert III. — his son by Ragnetruda — King of Austrasia. By this act, the royal authority was once more transferred to the hands of the seigniors, and the Merovingian dynasty tottered to its fall.

The natural and proper arrangement would have been to make Pepin the guardian of the infant king and administrator of the kingdom; but the jealousy

of the Parisian court was too strong to allow of this concession. While therefore Cunibert, Bishop of Cologne, was sent with Sigebert into Austrasia, Pepin was detained at the court of Dagobert, as a sort of hostage. From this time the Austrasians appear to have defended their borders against the Wends with energy and success.[1]

This arrangement was unwillingly made by the Neustrian court, under a sense of the necessity of conciliating the German subjects of the empire. It had become evident that, of the Frankish kingdoms, Austrasia was by far the strongest; while the Neustrians therefore yielded on this occasion from necessity and fear, they were anxious to provide a counterpoise to the Germanism of Austrasia, by more closely and permanently uniting the countries in which Gallo-Romanism was predominant. The birth of Clovis (the second son of Dagobert by Nanthildis) appeared to afford the means of carrying out their views; in which Dagobert himself, from his predilection for Neustrian luxury and refinement, was inclined to sympathise. "By the counsel and advice of the Neustrians," as the chronicler expressly relates, and the consent of the Austrasians (who had so lately carried their own point), Clovis II. was declared heir of the united kingdoms of Neustria and Burgundy, while Sigebert III. was confirmed in the possession of all that the former Kings of Austrasia had held, with one small exception. "This arrange-

[1] Fred. Chron. lxxv.

ment," we are told, "the Austrasians were compelled by their fear of Dagobert to sanction, whether they would or no." Nevertheless, it was strictly observed on the death of Dagobert, which took place in A. D. 638.[1]

THE MAYORS OF THE PALACE.

We may almost consider Dagobert as the last of the Merovingian monarchs, since he is the last who really exercised anything like independent royal authority. The name of king, indeed, was retained by his long-haired descendants for several generations, but the bearers of it were either children in years, or so weak in intellect from early debauchery and a neglected education, as to be the mere tools and puppets of their own servants. These shadowy forms, which excite in our minds both pity and contempt, are known in history as the *Rois fainéans*, a title which well expresses their inactivity and insignificance, and the merely nominal nature of their rule. While the storms of action rage around them, they are hidden from our gaze in the recesses of a court, half nursery, half harem.

The iron sceptre of the first Clovis, which his degenerate successors had dropped from their listless hands to raise the wine-cup or caress the harlot, was

[1] Fredeg. Chron. lxxvi. and lxxix.

seized with a vigorous grasp by men who exercised the loftiest functions under an almost menial name. At this period the real direction of affairs was left to the Majores-Domus, or Mayors of the Palace, whose power is seen continually to increase, till, in the hands of the Carlovingians, it becomes imperial; while that of the Salian monarchs, already greatly weakened, declines from year to year, till they become the mere puppets of an annual show.

We shall therefore take this opportunity of giving a short account of the origin and nature of the office of Major-Domus — the parasitical growth which sapped the strength of the Merovingian throne. And in the subsequent portion of this preliminary history we shall transfer our chief attention from the nominal to the actual rulers, and endeavour to relate, with all possible conciseness, the civil and military transactions of the mayors; and more particularly of those among them who, great in themselves, enjoy additional fame as progenitors of Charlemagne.

That the successful *Imperator* of an army should grow into an *Emperor*, or ruler of the nation,—that a *Cæsar* should become a *Kaisar*,—seems natural enough: but the humble and peaceful office originally designated by the words *Major-Domus* seems capable of no such development. The ideas connected with it are little suited to the proud and powerful Frankish warriors, who, under that simple title, performed the highest functions of government, achieved great conquests at the head of powerful armies, dethroned an ancient dynasty of kings, and in their posterity gave

successors to the Emperors of the West. This discrepancy between the name and the thing it denotes has excited general remark, and given rise to many learned and ingenious theories.[1]

In a former part of this work we have endeavoured to trace the gradual progress of the royal power among the Franks, and the simultaneous decline of those popular institutions by which liberty is sustained; and which, at an earlier period, existed among the Franks in common with other German peoples. It is important to keep this development in view during the present inquiry, because, as we shall see, the power of the mayors first rose *with* that of the kings, and then *upon* it.

The domestic condition of the Franks was greatly changed by their conquests in Gaul during the sixth century. As the result of a few fortunate battles, they found themselves in possession of well-stocked houses and fertile lands; and though they were too warlike themselves to settle down as cultivators of the soil, they contrived, by means of others, to derive considerable wealth from their estates. The same conquests which brought rich booty to all the Franks, secured, as we have seen, to the kings an enormous increase both of wealth and power. They still, indeed, in times of peace, continued to lead the life of great landed proprietors, passing in their rude carriages

[1] Sismondi derives Major-Domus from the words Mord-Dom, Judge of Murderers.

drawn by oxen from one of their estates to another, and consuming in turn the fruits of each; but the sudden and enormous addition to their means naturally led to an increase in the number of their dependents and a greater degree of external splendour in their mode of life. Even in their simplest state, as described by Tacitus, they must, like other wealthy men, have had not only numerous menials and slaves, domestic and agricultural, but overseers of the various departments of their household to provide them with all things necessary for their dignity, convenience, and pleasure. At the head of these, occupying the exact position of a house-steward in a nobleman's family, was the *major-domus*, whose purely domestic character is proved by the fact that he is ranked after the *Counts* and the *Domestici*. The nature of the count's office will be explained elsewhere; and the *domestici*, according to Loebell, were the more distinguished of the *Comitatus*, who fought about the person of the king. Besides the *major-domus* [1], we find mentioned as members of the royal household, the *Referendarius* (Chancellor), the *Comes Palatii* (Judge at the Royal Tribunal), *Cubicularius* and *Camerarii* (Chamberlain and Overseers of the Treasury), and the *Comes Stabuli* (Master of the Horse). These officials, some of whom appear to have been appointed in imitation of the practice of the Byzantine court, were originally mere personal attendants

[1] Loebell's Gregor von Tours, p. 183. *Greg. Turon.* ix. 36.: "Cui Comitibus, Domesticis, *Majoribus* atque nutritiis et omnibus qui ad exercendum *servitium regale* erant necessarii . . ."

on the king, who could dismiss them at pleasure. He was not even bound to select them from the free men, but could raise at will a freedman or a slave. It is an important consideration in this place that there was no class of hereditary nobility to limit the royal choice of servants. All history teaches us that the most sudden changes of fortune take place, not under a republic, or constitutional monarchy, but under arbitrary rulers, where the royal favour is the only recognised distinction — where a single word can shorten the long and toilsome path by which, under freer governments, merit seeks its appropriate reward.

The fact that the mayors of the palace are mentioned only three times by Gregory of Tours is a proof that in his age they had not acquired political importance.[1] Yet when we come to inquire more particularly into their position and functions, we shall find in their lowly office a germ of power, which favourable circumstances might easily foster into luxuriant growth. As stewards of the king's estates, and overseers of his personal attendants and servants, the dignity of their office would be in proportion to the extent of the former and the number of the latter. The conquest of Gaul, which did so much for royalty, must have raised the major-domus from a rich man's house-steward to a kind of chancellor of the exchequer; whose actual power was considerable, and whose indirect influence, as

[1] Badegisil, Waddo, and Florentianus. Greg. Tur. vi. 9. 45., ix. 30.

the immediate agent in the distribution of royal favours, was only limited by his ability to take advantage of his position. It was through him that money, lands, and offices were distributed among the numerous warriors, who in those unsettled times assembled round a rich and warlike king. To the provincials, more particularly, who had been accustomed to the low intrigues of a Roman court, and had learned to seek the favour of those who in *any* relation stood near the throne, the major-domus would appear a man of great importance. His means of influence would be further increased by the selfish liberality of those who sought his aid, or received advantages through his hands.

And thus, as the royal power increased, the position of the mayors continued to improve. As the popular assemblies on the Campus Martius declined in importance, no small share of the power they had once possessed was transferred to the attendants of the king. Energetic rulers needed not, and greatly disliked, the free discussions of the assembled people; and weak and bad ones naturally feared them. Yet all men shrink from the sole responsibility of important decisions; even a Xerxes summons his noble slaves and asks their counsel, though he lets them know that he is free to act against it. And the Frankish king was glad at times to consult the more dignified of his servants, his greatest captains, and his most holy and learned priests. From such elements a royal council was gradually formed, which soon obtained a kind of prescriptive right

to be heard on great occasions, and played an important part in Frankish history. In this assembly the major-domus, as being nearest to the king's person, and always on the spot, naturally took a leading part, when his character and abilities enabled him to do so. The importance of this royal council may be better estimated when we consider of whom it was composed. There were, in the first place, the *Courtiers*, i. e., the holders of offices about the king, of whom the major-domus was the first. Secondly, the *Antrustiones*, whose character and position we have elsewhere defined. Thirdly, a great number of dependent rulers, as the *hereditary Dukes of Bavaria and Alemannia*, who were allowed to retain their power under the protection of the Frankish monarchs. Fourthly, *the Patricii of Burgundy, Massilia, and Ripuaria.* Fifthly, *the Dukes, Counts, Thungini*, &c.; of whom the last-mentioned were appointed by the king as governors of provinces and gaus.[1] And, in the last place, *the great dignitaries of the Church;* who, in proportion as they became more and more secularised by their wealth, went more frequently to court, and made themselves welcome and influential there, by their superior learning, splendour, and refinement.

In this great assembly of dependent governors, antrustiones, and bishops, which soon became a regularly constituted council, the major-domus presided as the representative, though a humble one,

[1] Vid. Pertz, Fränkische Hausmeier.

of the king.[1] As such, a portion of the executive power fell at all times into his hands; and during a minority of the crown his influence was in exact proportion to his tact in making use of his favourable position, and his ability to maintain his ground amid the intrigues and struggles of opposing factions.

We need not be surprised to find that, to the civil duties of the major-domus, was added the command of the royal retinue. In the times of which we speak there were no civilians except ecclesiastics (and even these, as we know, were not entirely destitute of that military spirit which was a necessity and a characteristic of the age)[2]; and the mayors of the palace would have had but little chance of improving or even maintaining their position, of satisfying their royal master, or controlling his household, had they not been both able and willing to play a prominent part upon the battle-field.

The military duties of the mayoralty naturally became more arduous and important when the monarchs themselves were deficient in warlike qualities; and hence the office was generally bestowed upon some distinguished warrior. This was the case even while the mayors continued to be the nominees and servants of the king; for it was to their major-domus,

[1] Greg. Tur. vii. 13, 14. 23., viii. 21.

[2] The servants of the crown in this age seem to have held themselves ready for any kind of service and promotion. Badegisil, *Regiæ Domus Major*, was suddenly made a bishop. Greg. Tur. vi. 9. Another major-domus was employed in making a census. Greg. Tur. ix. 30.

and the more immediate dependents of the crown whom he commanded, that the monarch looked for support in his contests with the rising aristocracy. While the monarchy was strong, we find the mayors the steady upholders of the royal power. But in the anarchic period which followed the death of Sigebert I., the office of mayor, like every other honourable post, became the subject of a scramble, and fell into the hands of those great proprietors, whose encroachments on the royal prerogative it was designed to repel. The importance of the position occupied by the mayor, and the great advantages he was able to bring to whatever side he espoused, were too evident to be overlooked by the enemies of the monarchy; and accordingly we find that one of the first uses made by the Austrasian seigniors of their victory over Brunhilda, was to make the mayoralty elective, and independent of the crown. This important change took place in both the great divisions of the Frankish empire, but many circumstances tended to render the development of the power of the mayors far more rapid and complete in Austrasia than in Neustria. In the latter, kingdom the resistance which the seigniors could offer to the crown, was weaker, both because they were themselves in a less degree homogeneous than in the German portion of the empire, and because they could not reckon upon the sympathy and aid of the Romano-Gallic population. In Austrasia the case was different. Even there indeed, though the nation was mainly German, the tendencies of the

court were decidedly Romance; and not unnaturally so, for among the Roman provincials was found the external civilisation—the grace of manner, the decorative arts of life, the skill in the refined indulgence of the passions, which throw a brilliant light around a throne, and are calculated to engage the affections of its occupants. But the Romanising leanings of the court were not shared in by the Austrasian seigniors, or the people at large; and the struggle between the monarchy and the nascent aristocracy in Austrasia was embittered by national antipathies. We have already seen the issue of the contest in favour of the seigniors, and their victory must be regarded as another triumph of the Germans over the Gallo-Romans. The mayors of the palace, whose consequence had been greatly increased during frequent and long minorities, understood the crisis; and, placing themselves at the head of the great landed proprietors of Austrasia, succeeded in depriving the Merovingian kings of the realities of power, while they left them its external shows.

Yet, favourable as had hitherto been the circumstances of the times to the rising power of the mayors, it needed another remarkable coincidence to raise them to royal and imperial thrones. Notwithstanding the influence they had acquired at the end of the sixth century, and the powerful support they received from the great proprietors, banded together in resistance to the crown, the struggle was a long and doubtful one; though the champion of mon-

archy was a woman. Fear is the mother of cruelty; and bloody as were the dreadful times in which Brunhilda lived, her enemies would never have taken such a fiendish delight in her sufferings, had not their hatred been rendered more intense by previous doubts and fears — had they not been rendered delirious with the joy of an unlooked-for success. Had the Merovingian stock continued to produce a succession of able men — had it even sent forth one in whom the fire of Clovis burned — the steady though slumbering loyalty of the people might have been roused, the factious seigniors destroyed in detail, and the career of the king-making mayors brought to a bloody termination at another Barnet.

The actual state of things was, as we have seen, the very reverse of all this. Instead of a vigorous young warrior like our own Edward IV., the Frankish nobles had boys and women to contend with. For a long period the sceptre was in the hands of a succession of minors, who met with the foulest play from those who should have been their guardians. Precocious by nature, and exposed to the allurements of every enfeebling indulgence and hurtful vice, they gladly yielded up the all too heavy sceptre to the rude hands of their warlike keepers, and received in exchange the cap and bells of the jester and the fool.

And while the Merovingian race in its decline is notorious in history as having produced an unexampled number of imbecile monarchs, the family which was destined to supplant them was no less wonderfully prolific in warriors and statesmen of the

highest class. It is not often that great endowments are transmitted even from father to son, but the line from which Charlemagne sprang presents to our admiring gaze an almost uninterrupted succession of five remarkable men, within little more than a single century. Of these the first three held the mayoralty of Austrasia; and it was they who prevented the permanent establishment of absolute power on the Roman model, and secured to the German population of Austrasia an abiding victory over that amalgam of degraded Romans and corrupted Gauls, which threatened to leaven the European world. To them, under Providence, we owe it that the centre of Europe is at this day German, and not Gallo-Latin.

From this brief sketch of the origin and progress of the mayors of the palace, who play so important a part in the succeeding age, we return to the point in the general history from which the digression was made.

On the death of Dagobert, A.D. 638, his son, Clovis II., a child of six years old, succeeded him. During his minority the government of Neustria and Burgundy was carried on by his mother Nanthildis, and the Major-Domus Æga, while Pepin and others shared the supreme power in Austrasia. Pepin died A.D. 639 or 640 [1], and a long and ferocious contest ensued for the vacant mayoralty, which was finally taken possession of by Pepin's own son Grimoald.

1 "Nec parvum dolorem ejusdem transitus cunctis generavit in Auster."—*Fred. Chron.* lxxxv.

So low had the power of the nominal monarchs already sunk, that, on the death of Sigebert III., in A. D. 656, Grimoald ventured to shear the locks of the rightful heir, Dagobert II., and, giving out that he was dead, sent him to Ireland; he then proposed his own son for the vacant throne, under the pretence that Sigebert had adopted him.[1] But the time was not yet ripe for so daring an usurpation, nor does Grimoald appear to have been the man to take the lead in a revolution. Both the attempt itself, and its miserable issue, go to prove that the son of Pepin did not inherit the wisdom and energy of the illustrious stock to which he belonged. The King of Burgundy and Neustria, pretending to acquiesce in the accession of Grimoald's son, summoned the father to Paris, and caused him to be seized during his journey by some Franks — who are represented as being highly indignant at his presumption — and put to death.[2]

The whole Frankish empire was thus once more united, at least in name, under Clovis II. (who also died in A. D. 656), and under his son and successor, Clotaire III., whose mother, Balthildis, an Anglo-Saxon by birth, administered the kingdom with great ability and success. But the interests and feelings of the German provinces were too distinct from those of Burgundy and Neustria to allow of their long remaining even nominally under one head. The

[1] Sigeberti Vita, cap. v. s. 15. (ap. Bouquet, ii. p. 602.).

[2] Gesta Regum Francorum, xliii. (Bouq. ii. p. 568.). "In Scotiam majorem Hiberniamve, Scottorum insulam . . . ." — *Had. Valesii Ep.* (Bouq. ii. p. 727.).

Austrasians were eager to have a king of their own, and accordingly another son of Clovis was raised to the throne of Austrasia under the title of Childeric II., with Wulfoald as his major-domus.

At the death of Clotaire III. in Neustria (in A. D. 670), the whole empire was thrown into confusion by the ambitious projects of Ebroin, his major-domus, who sought to place Theoderic III., Clotaire's youngest brother, who was still a mere child, on the throne, that he might continue to reign in his name. Ebroin appears to have proceeded towards his object with too little regard for the opinions and feelings of the other seigniors, who rose against him and his puppet king, and drove them from the seat of power. The successful conspirators then offered the crown of Neustria to Childeric II., King of Austrasia, who immediately proceeded to take possession, while Ebroin sought refuge in a monastery.[1] Childeric ascended the Neustrian throne without opposition; but his attempts to control the seigniors, one of whom, named Badilo, he is said to have scourged, gave rise to a formidable conspiracy; and he was soon afterwards assassinated, together with his queen and son at Chelles. Wulfoald escaped with difficulty, and returned to Austrasia. Another son of Childeric, Childebert III., was then raised upon the shield by the seigniors, while the royal party brought forward Theoderic III. from the monas-

1 Fredeg. Chron. Contin. xciv., xcv. (ap. Bouquet, ii. p. 450.). Gesta Reg. Franc. xlv. Vita S. Leodegarii, c. iv. (ap. Bouquet, ii. p. 629.).

tery to which he had retired, and succeeded in making good his claim. The turbulent and unscrupulous but able Ebroin ventured once more to leave his place of refuge, and by a long series of the most treacherous murders, and by setting up a pretender —as Clovis, a son of Clotaire III.—he succeeded (in A. D. 673 or 674) in forcing himself upon Theoderic as Major-Domus of Neustria.[1]

In the meantime Dagobert II., whom Grimoald had sent as a child to Ireland, and who had subsequently found a faithful friend in the well-known St. Wilfrid, Bishop of York, was recalled and placed on the Austrasian throne. But the restored prince soon (in A. D. 678) fell a victim to the intrigues of Ebroin, and the Neustrian faction among the seigniors, who aimed at bringing the whole empire under their own arbitrary power.[2] Nor does it seem at all improbable that the ability and audacity of Ebroin might have enabled them to carry out their designs, had not Austrasia possessed a leader fully equal to the emergency. Pepin, surnamed of Heristal from a castle belonging to his family in the neighbourhood of Liége, was the son of Ansegisus by Begga, the illustrious daughter of Pepin of Landen. This great man, who proved himself worthy of his grandsire and

[1] Fred. Chron. Cont. xcvi. *Vita S. Leodegarii*, c. viii.: "Ut Leo rugiens . . . . resonuit rugitus ejus per terras Francorum."

[2] Had. Valesii Ep. de Dagoberto (ap. Bouquet, ii. p. 727.). Vita S. Wilfrid. per Edd. Stephan. c. xxvii. (in Act. S. S. Ord. S. Bened. s. iv. pt. i. p. 670. Paris, 1677). Gesta Reg. Franc. xlvi.

his mother, was at this time associated with Duke Martin in the government of Austrasia, which up to A. D. 630 had been administered by Wulfoald.[1] Martin and Pepin summoned their followers to arms to meet the expected attack of the Neustrians. In the first instance, however, the Austrasians were surprised by the activity of Ebroin, who fell upon them before they had completed their preparations, and totally defeated them in the neighbourhood of Lucofaus.[2] Martin fled to the town of Laon; and the artifices by which his enemies lured him from this retreat to his destruction are worthy of notice, as giving us a remarkable picture of the manners of the period in general, and of the sad state of the Church in particular. Ebroin, hearing that his intended victim had reached a place of safety, despatched Agilbert, Bishop of Paris, and Probus, Bishop of Rheims, to persuade Martin to repair to the Neustrian camp. In order to dispel the apprehensions with which he listened to them, these holy men went through the not unusual ceremony of swearing upon a receptacle containing sacred relics, that he should suffer no injury by following their advice. The bishops, however, to save themselves from the guilt of perjury, had taken care that the vessels, which were covered,

[1] Begga is spoken of in the highest terms by the annalists: "Soror ejus Beggha nupta Ansigiso, S. Arnulphi Metensis Episcopi filio, regiæ dignitatis decus, quod penitus deperierat per Regum Francorum inauditam desidiam per suam reparavit prosapiam." *Vita S. Sigeberti*, c. 10. (ap. Bouquet, ii. p. 600.).

[2] Gesta Reg. Franc. xlvi. Lufao or Lifou (Loixi near Laon?). Conf. Fred. Chron. Cont. xcvii.

should be left empty.[1] Martin, whom they omitted to inform of this important fact, was satisfied with their oaths, and accompanied them to Ecri, where he and his followers were immediately assassinated, without, as was thought, any detriment to the faith of the envoys! Pepin, however, was neither to be cajoled nor frightened into submission, and soon found himself at the head of a powerful force, consisting in part of Neustrian exiles, whom the tyranny of Ebroin had ruined or offended. A collision seemed inevitable, when the position of affairs was suddenly changed by the death of Ebroin, who was assassinated in A. D. 681 by Hermenfried, a distinguished Neustrian Frank. Waratto followed him in the mayoralty of Neustria, and seemed inclined to live on friendly terms with Pepin; but Gislemar, his son, who headed the party most hostile to Pepin, succeeded in getting possession of the government for a time, and renewed the war against the Austrasians. Gislemar's death (in A. D. 684), which the annalists attribute to the Divine anger[2], restored Waratto to his former power; and hostilities ceased for a time. When Waratto also died, about two years after his undutiful son, he was succeeded by Berchar, his son-in-law, whom the annalist pithily describes as "statura parvus, intellectu modicus."

The insolent disregard which this man showed to

[1] *Fredeg. Chron. Cont.* xcvii.: "Super *vacuas* capsas." Chron. Moissiac. an. 680 (ap. Mon. Germ. ed. Pertz, i. p. 288.). Adonis Chron. an. 680 (Bouq. ii. p. 670.).

[2] "A Deo percussus."—*Fredeg. Chron. Cont.* xcviii.

the feelings and wishes of the most powerful Neustrians, induced many of them to make common cause with Pepin, to whom they are said to have bound themselves by hostages. In A.D. 687 Pepin was strong enough to assume the offensive; and, yielding to the entreaties of the Neustrian refugees, he sent an embassy to Theoderic III. to demand the restoration of the exiles to their confiscated lands.[1] The King of Neustria, prompted by Berchar, his major-domus, haughtily replied that he would come himself and fetch his runaway slaves. Pepin then prepared for war, with the unanimous consent of the Austrasian seigniors, whose wishes he scrupulously consulted. Marching through the *Silva Carbonaria* (in Belgium), he entered the Neustrian territory, and took post at Testri on the river Somme.[2] Theoderic and Berchar also collected a large army and marched to meet the invaders. The two armies encamped in sight of each other near the village of Testri, on opposite sides of the little river Daumignon, the Neustrians on the southern and the Austrasians on the northern bank. Whether from policy or a higher motive, Pepin displayed great unwillingness, even then, to bring the matter to extremities; and, sending emissaries into the camp of Theoderic, he once more endeavoured to negotiate; demanding, amongst other things, that the property of which the churches had been "despoiled by wicked tyrants" should be restored to them. He promised that, if his conditions of peace were accepted

[1] Fredeg. Chron. Cont. xcix. Vita Pippini Ducis, an. 687. (Bouq. ii. p. 608.). Gesta Reg. Franc. xlviii.

[2] Near St. Quentin.

and the effusion of kindred blood prevented, he would give the king a large amount of silver and gold. The wise and humane reluctance of Pepin was naturally construed by Theoderic and his "little-minded" mayor into fear, and distrust of his army, which was inferior to their own in numbers: a haughty answer was returned, and all negotiations broken off. Both sides then prepared for the morrow's battle. Pepin, having passed the night in forming his plans, crossed the river before daybreak and drew up his army to the east of Theoderic's position, that the rising sun might blind the enemy. The spies of Theoderic reported that the Austrasian camp was deserted, on which the Neustrians were led out to pursue the flying foe.[1] The mistake of the scouts was soon made clear by the vigorous onset of Pepin; and after a fierce but brief combat the Neustrians were totally defeated, and Theoderic and Berchar fled from the field.[2] The latter was slain by his own followers: the king was taken prisoner, but his life was mercifully spared.

The battle of Testri is notable in Frankish history as that in which the death-stroke was given to the

[1] Annal. Mett. (Mon. Germ. i. p. 316.), an. 687—690. Fred. Chron. Cont. c.

[2] Pepin was even more remarkable for personal courage than for his generalship. *Paullus Diaconus*, vi. 37.: "Fuit autem vir miræ audaciæ, qui hostes suos aggrediendo statim conterebat." He relates that on one occasion he rushed on the camp of his enemies with only one follower, and cut their general and his attendants to pieces in his tent.

Merovingian dynasty, by an ancestor of a far more glorious race of monarchs. "From this time forward," says the chronicler Erchambertus, "the kings began to have only the royal name, and not the royal dignity." A very striking picture of the Rois Fainéans has been handed down to us by Einhard, the friend and secretary of Charlemagne, in his famous life of his royal master. "The race of the Merovingians," he says, "from which the Franks were formerly accustomed to choose their kings, is generally considered to have ended with Chilperic; who, at the command of the Roman Pontiff Stephen, was deposed, shorn of his locks, and sent into a monastery. But although the stock died out with him, it had long been entirely without life and vigour, and had no distinction beyond the empty title of king; for the authority and government were in the hands of the highest officers of the palace, who were called majores-domus, and had the entire administration of affairs. Nothing was left to the king, except that, contenting himself with the mere royal name, he was allowed to sit on the throne with long hair and unshorn beard, to play the part of a ruler, to hear the ambassadors from whatever part they might come, and at their departure to communicate to them the answers which he had been taught or even commanded to make, as if by his own authority. Besides the worthless title of king, and a scanty maintenance, which the major-domus meted out according to his pleasure, the king possessed only one farm, and that by no means a

lucrative one, on which he had a dwelling-house and a few servants, just sufficient to supply his most urgent necessities. Wherever he had to go, he travelled in a carriage drawn by a yoke of oxen and driven by a cowherd in rustic fashion. It was thus that he went to the palace, to the public assembly of the people, which met every year for the good of the kingdom; after which he returned home. But the whole administration of the state, and everything which had to be regulated or executed, either at home or abroad, was carried on by the mayors."[1]

The whole power of the three kingdoms was thus suddenly thrown into the hands of Pepin, who showed in his subsequent career that he was equal to the far more difficult task of keeping, by his wisdom and moderation, what he had gained by the vigour of his intellect and his undaunted valour. He, too, was happily free from the little vanity which takes more delight in the pomp than in the realities of power, and, provided he possessed the substantial authority, was contented to leave the royal name to others.[2] He must have felt himself strong enough to do what his uncle Grimoald had vainly attempted, and his grandson happily accomplished; but he saw that by grasping at the shadow he might lose the substance. He was surrounded by proud and sus-

[1] Einhard. Vit. Carol. c. 1.

[2] *Vita Pippini Ducis* (Bouq. ii. p. 603.): "Dux et major-domus . . . qua dignitate *modice differente* sublimitate regia præditus."

picious seigniors, whose jealousy would have been more excited by his taking the title, than by his exercising the powers of a king; and, strange though it may seem, the reverence for the ancient race, and the notion of their exclusive and inalienable rights, were far from being extinguished in the breasts of the common people.[1] By keeping Theoderic upon the throne and ruling in his name, he united both reason and prejudice in support of his government. Yet some approach was made—though probably not by his own desire—towards acknowledged sovereignty in the case of Pepin. He was called *Dux et Princeps Francorum*, and the years of his office were reckoned, as well as those of the king, in all public documents.

Having fixed the seat of his government in Austrasia, as the more German and warlike portion of his dominions, he named dependents of his own, and subsequently his two sons, Drogo and Grimoald, to rule as mayors in the two other divisions of the empire. He gave the greatest proof of his power and popularity by restoring the assemblies of the Campus Martius, a purely German institution, which under the Romanising Merovingian monarchs had gradually declined. At these annual meetings, which were held on the 1st of March, the whole nation assembled for the purpose of discussing measures for the ensuing year. None but a ruler who was conscious of his own strength, and of an honest desire for the welfare

[1] *Vita Pipp. Duc.* (ibid.); "Erat erga Regem fidei servantissimus . . Nec munera Populi ad subvertendum jus regium respiciebat."

of his people, would have voluntarily submitted himself and his actions to the chances of such an ordeal.[1]

As soon as he had firmly fixed himself in his seat, and secured the submission of the envious seigniors, and the love of the people, who looked to him as the only man who could save them from the evils of anarchy, he turned his attention to the re-establishment of the Frankish empire in its full extent. The neighbouring tribes, which had with difficulty, and for the most part imperfectly, been subdued by Clovis and his successors, were ready to seize upon every favourable occasion of ridding themselves of the hated yoke.[2] Nor were the poor imbecile boys

[1] *Annal. Mett.* an. 692 (Mon. Germ. i. p. 320.): "Singulis vero annis in Kalendis Martii generale cum omnibus Francis, secundum priscorum consuetudinem, Concilium agebat; in quo ob regii nominis reverentiam eum quem sibi ipse propter humilitatis et mansuetudinis magnitudinem præfecerat præsidere jubebat; donec ab omnibus Optimatibus Francorum donariis acceptis, verboque pro pace et defensione ecclesiarum Dei et pupillorum et viduarum facto, raptuque fœminarum et incendio solide decreto interdicto, exercitui quoque præcepto dato ut quacumque die illis denunciaretur, parati essent in partem quam ipse disponeret proficisci." Conf. Vit. Car. Einhard. s. i.

[2] *Annal. Mettens.* an. 687.: "Hac etenim gentes olim, et aliæ plurimæ multis sudoribus adquisitæ Francorum summo obtemperabant imperio. Sed propter desidiam Regum, et domesticus dissensiones, et bella civilia · · singuli in proprio solo armis libertatem moliebantur defendere." *Erchanberti Fragm.* (written in the time of Carl Martel): "Illis namque temporibus ac deinceps Gotefredus, Dux Alamannorum, cæterique circumquaque Duces noluerunt obtemperare Ducibus Francorum eo quod non potuerunt regibus Merovæis servire sicut antea soliti fuerant. Ideo se unusquisque *secum tenuit* donec tandem aliquando post mortem Gotefridi Ducis Carlus, cæterique Principes Francorum paulatim ad se revocare illos arte qua poterant studuere."

who bore the name of kings, or the turbulent mayors and seigniors, who were wholly occupied with plotting and counterplotting, railing and fighting, against one another, at all in a position to call the subject states to account, or to excite in them the desire of being incorporated with an empire harassed and torn by intestine dissensions. The Frankish empire was in process of dissolution, and all the more distant tribes, as the Bavarians, the Alemannians, Frisians, Bretons, and Gascons, had virtually recovered their independence. But this partial decline of the Frankish power was simply the result of misgovernment, and the domestic feuds which absorbed the martial vigour of the nation; and by no means indicated the decline of a military spirit in the Frankish people. They only needed a centre of union and a leader worthy of them, both of which they found in Pepin, to give them once more the *hegemony* over all the German tribes, and prepare them for the conquest of Europe.[1] The Frisians were subdued, or rather repressed for a time, in A. D. 697, after a gallant resistance under their king Ratbod; and about twelve years afterwards we find the son of Pepin, Grimoald, forming a matrimonial alliance with Theudelinda, daughter of the Frisian monarch; a fact which plainly implies that Pepin desired to cultivate the friendship of his warlike neighbours.[2] The Suabians,

[1] *Annal. Mett.*, an. 690—695.: "Confluebant autem ad eum circumsitarum gentium legationes, Græcorum scilicet Romanorum, Langobardorum, Hunorum, quoque et Sclavorum atque Saracenorum."

[2] Fredeg. Chron. Cont. cii., civ.

or Alemanni, were also attacked and defeated by Pepin on their own territories; but their final subjection was completed by his son Carl Martel.

The wars carried on by Pepin with the above-mentioned nations, to which in this place we can only briefly allude, occupied him nearly twenty years; and were greatly instrumental in preserving peace at home, and consolidating the foundations of the Carlovingian throne. The stubborn resistance he met with from the still heathen Germans, was animated with something of that zeal, against which his great descendant Charlemagne had to contend in his interminable Saxon wars; for the adoption of Christianity, which was hated, not only as being hostile to the superstitions of their forefathers, but on account of the heavy taxes by which it was accompanied, was always made by Pepin the indispensable condition of mercy and peace. But, happily for the cause of Gospel truth, other means were used for the spread of Christianity than the sword and the scourge; and the labours of many a zealous and self-sacrificing missionary from Ireland and England, served to convince the rude German tribes, that the warrior-priests whom they had met on the battle-field, and the greedy tax-gatherers who infested their homes, were not the true ambassadors of the Prince of Peace. And Pepin, who was by no means a mere warrior, was well aware of the value of these peaceful efforts; and afforded zealous aid to all who ventured their lives in the holy cause of human improvement and salvation. The civil governors whom he established in the conquered

provinces were directed to do all in their power to promote the spread of Christianity by peaceful means; and, to give effect to his instructions, Pepin warned them that he should hold them responsible for the lives of his pious missionaries.

During these same twenty years, in which Pepin was playing the important and brilliant part assigned to him by Providence, the pale and bloodless shadows of four Merovingian kings flit gloomily across the scene. We know little or nothing of them except their names, and the order in which they followed each other. Theoderic III. died A. D. 691, and was succeeded by Clovis III., who reigned till A. D. 695 and was followed by Childebert III. On the death of Childebert in A. D. 711, Pepin raised Dagobert III. to the nominal throne, where he left him when he himself departed from the scene of his labours and triumphs; and this is really all that we feel called upon to say of the descendants of the conquerors of Gaul and founders of the Western Empire; "inclitum et notum olim, nunc tantum auditur!"[1]

The extraordinary power which Pepin exercised at a period when law was weak, and authority extended no further than the sword could reach; when the struggles of the rising feudal aristocracy for independence had convulsed the empire and brought it to the verge of anarchy, sufficiently attests the ability

[1] Tac. Germ. xli. *Annal. Francor.* ad an. 714.: "Pippinus Dux Francorum · · obtinuit regnum Francorum per annos XXVII, *cum Regibus sibi subjectis*, Illuduwigo, Hildiberto, et Dagoberto."

and courage, the wisdom and moderation, with which he ruled. His triumphs over the ancient dynasty, and the Neustrian faction, were far from being the most difficult of his achievements. He had to control the very class to which he himself belonged; to curb the turbulent spirits of the very men who had raised him to his proud pre-eminence; and to establish regal authority over those by whose aid he had humbled the ancient kings: and all this he succeeded in doing by the extraordinary influence of his personal character. So firmly indeed had he established his government, and subdued the wills of the envious seigniors by whom he was surrounded, that even when he showed his intention of making his power hereditary in his family, they dared not, at the time, oppose his will.[1] On the death of Norbert, major-domus at the court of Childebert III., Pepin—in all probability without even consulting the seigniors, in whom the right of election rested—appointed his second son Grimoald to the vacant office. To his eldest son Drogo he had already given the Mayoralty of Burgundy, with the title of Duke of Campania. But though they dared not make any opposition at the time, it is evident from what followed that the fear of Pepin alone restrained the rage they felt at this open usurpation. In A. D. 714, when Pepin's life was drawing to a close, and he lay at Jopil near Liege upon a bed of sickness, awaiting patiently his approaching end, the great vassals took heart, and conspired to deprive his de-

[1] Fredeg. Chron. Cont. ci.

scendants of the mayoralty. They employed the usual means for effecting their purpose—treachery and murder.[1] Grimoald was assassinated, while praying in the Church of St. Lambert at Jopil, by a Frisian of the name of Rantgar, who relied, no doubt, on the complicity of the seigniors and the weakness of Pepin for impunity. But the conspirators had miscalculated the waning sands of the old warrior's life, and little knew the effect which the sight of his son's blood would have upon him. He suddenly recovered from the sickness to which he seemed to be succumbing. Like another Priam, he once more seized his unaccustomed arms, though, unlike the royal Trojan, he used them with terrible effect. After taking an ample revenge upon the murderers of his son, and quenching the spirit of resistance in the blood of the conspirators, he was so far from giving up his purpose, or manifesting any consciousness of weakness, that he nominated the infant and illegitimate son of Grimoald, as if by hereditary right, to the joint mayoralty of Burgundy and Neustria—an office which the highest persons in the land would have been proud to exercise.[2] By his very last act, therefore, he showed the absolute mastery he had obtained, not only over the "do-nothing" kings, but

[1] *Annal. Mett.* ad an. 714.: Cum "diutius (Grimoaldus) in oratione pronus persisteret, a nequissimo viro nomine Rantgario, gladio percussus, occubuit."

[2] *Ibid.*: "Pippinus vero Princeps de infirmitate convalescens, omnes qui in illo consilio fuerant justa ultione interemit." Fred. Chron. Cont. c., cii. *Annal. Mett.*: "Ex Concubina Natum (Theudoaldum)."

over the factious seigniors, who shrank in terror before the wrath of one who had, as it were, repassed the gates of death, to hurl destruction on their heads. His actual demise took place in the same year, on the 16th of December, A. D. 714.

Pepin had two wives, the first of whom, Plectrude, bore him two sons, Drogo and Grimoald, neither of whom survived their father. In A. D. 688 he married a second wife, the "noble and elegant" Alpais, though Plectrudis was still alive.[1] From this second marriage sprang the real successor of the Pepins, whom his father named in his own language Carl, and who is renowned in history as Carl Martel, the bulwark of Christendom, the father of kings and emperors.

Our estimate of the personal greatness of the Carlovingian mayors is greatly raised when we observe that each of them in turn, instead of taking quiet possession of what his predecessors had won, has to reconquer his position in the face of numerous, powerful and exasperated enemies. It was so with Pepin of Landen, with Pepin of Heristal, and most of all in the case of Carl Martel.[2]

At the death of Pepin the storm which had long been gathering, and of which many forebodings had appeared in his lifetime, broke forth with tremendous

[1] *Fred. Chron. Cont.* ciii.: "Uxorem . . . nomine Alpheidam." Ex. Chron. Moiss. ad an. 708 (Monum. Germ. tom. i., p. 289.), where she is called Alpaigde (Alpagede).

[2] "Qui Tudetes, i.e. Martellus est agnominatus." — *Vita S. Sigeberti*, c. x. *Fred. Chron.* civ.: "Magna et valida perturbatio et persecutio exstitit apud gentem Francorum." Conf. Ann. Mett.

fury. The bands of government were suddenly loosened, and the powers which Pepin had wielded with such strength and dexterity became the objects of a ferocious struggle. Plectrudis, his first wife, an ambitious and daring woman, had resolved to reign as the guardian of her grandchild, Theudoald, with whom she was at that time residing at Cologne.[1] Theudoald had at least the advantage of being the only candidate for power installed by Pepin himself, and it was no doubt upon his quasi-hereditary claims that Plectrudis based her hopes. She manifested her foresight, discrimination, and energy, at the commencement of the contest which ensued by seizing the person of Carl, her stepson, and most formidable rival.[2] But Carl and his party were not her only opponents. The Neustrians and Burgundians, whom their recollections of Brunhilda and Fredegunda by no means inclined to acquiesce in another female regency, refused obedience to her commands; and endeavoured to excite the puppet-monarch Dagobert to an independent exercise of his authority.[3] Their zeal as Neustrians too was quickened by the desire of throwing off the Austrasian or German yoke, which they considered to have been fixed upon them by the victories and energetic rule of Pepin. It was

[1] Fredeg. Chron. Cont. civ. Chron. Moiss. an. 715.

[2] *Annal. Mett.* an. 715.: "Incomparabili odio contra Carolum incensa."

[3] *Ann. Mett.* an. 715.: "Quod (regnum) dum crudelius quam oporteret astu femineo disponere decrevisset, iram Niustrium Francorum in nepotis sui interitum et Principum qui cum eo erant celeriter convertit."

owing to this hostile feeling between the Romance and the German portions of the empire that many even of Pepin's partizans[1] took side with Theudoald and Plectrudis, although the latter held their chief incarcerated. The revolted Neustrians and the army of Plectrudis encountered each other in the forest of Guise, near Compiegne; and, as far as one can conjecture from the confused and contradictory accounts of the annalists, Plectrudis and Theudoald suffered a defeat. The Neustrians having obtained the mastery over the hated Germans in their own country, prepared to extend their authority to Austrasia itself. Having chosen Raginfried as their major-domus, they suddenly marched into the Austrasian territory, and laid it waste with fire and sword as far as the river Meuse. In spite of their Christian profession they sought further to strengthen themselves by an alliance with Ratbod, the heathen King of the Frisians, who at the death of Pepin had recovered his independence, and the greater portion of his territory.[2]

In the meantime, the whole aspect of affairs was

[1] The author of the Annal. Mett. an. 715., charges them with ungratefully forgetting all the benefits conferred on them by Pepin: "*Tunc gens illa omnium beneficiorum invicti Principis pariter oblita.*" The expression in Fredegar (Chron. Cont. civ.) is "Leudes Pippini," which is very obscure in this place.

[2] *Fredeg. Chron. Cont.* civ. (We gather this from the flight of Theudoald):. "Corruit ibi immodicus exercitus, Theudoaldus itaque a sodalibus suis per fugam lapsus evasit." *Annal. Mett.*: "Theodaldus cum paucis vix evasit, qui non multo post tempore vitam innocentem finivit."

suddenly changed by the escape of Carl from custody.[1] The defeated army of Plectrudis, and many of the Austrasian seigniors, who were unwilling to support her cause even against the Neustrians, now rallied with the greatest alacrity round the youthful hero, and proclaimed him *Dux Francorum* by the title of his glorious father. In a very short time after the recovery of his freedom, Carl found himself at the head of a very efficient, though not numerous army. He was still, however, surrounded by dangers and difficulties, under which a man of less extraordinary powers must inevitably have sunk.

Dagobert III. died soon after the battle of Compiegne; and the Neustrians, who had felt the disadvantage of his imbecility, neglected the claims of his son, and raised a priest called Daniel, a reputed son of Childeric, to the throne, with the title of Chilperic II.[2] This monarch, who appears to have had a greater degree of energy than his immediate predecessors, formed a plan with the Frisian king for a combined attack upon Cologne, by which he hoped at once to bring the war to a successful issue. Ratbod, true to his engagements, advanced with a numerous fleet of vessels up the Rhine, while Chilperic and Raginfried were marching towards Cologne through the forest of Ardennes. To prevent this

[1] Fred. Chron. Cont. cv. Chron. Moissiac. Paullus Diac. vi. 42.

[2] *Fred. Chron. Cont.* cvi.: "Danihelem quondam Clericum cæsarie capitis crescente in Regnum stabiliunt. . . ."

well-planned junction, Carl determined to fall upon the Frisians before they reached Cologne. His position must have been rendered still more critical by the failure of this attack. We read that after both parties had suffered considerable loss in a hard-fought battle, they retreated on equal terms.[1]

The short time which elapsed before the arrival of the Neustrians was spent by Carl in summoning his friends from every quarter, to assist him in the desperate struggle in which he was engaged. In the meantime Chilperic came up, and, encamping in the neighbourhood of Cologne, effected a junction with the Frisians. Contrary to expectation, however, no attack was made upon Plectrudis, who is said to have bribed the Frisians to retire. A better reason for the precipitate retreat of the Neustrians and Frisians (which now took place) was the danger which the former ran of having their retreat cut off by Carl, who had taken up a strong position in their rear, with continually increasing forces; as it was, they were not permitted to retire in safety. Carl attacked them at Ambleve, near Stablo, in the Ardennes, and gave them a total defeat. This victory put him in possession of Cologne, and the person of Plectrudis, who restored to him his father's treasures.

In the following year, A.D. 717, Carl assumed the offensive, and, marching through the *Silva Carbonaria*, began to lay waste the Neustrian territory. Chilperic and Raginfried advanced to meet him, doubtless

[1] Annal. Mett. an. 716.

with far less confidence than before; and both armies encamped at Vinci, in the territory of Cambrai. Carl, with an hereditary moderation peculiarly admirable in a man of his warlike spirit, sent envoys to the Neustrian camp to offer conditions of peace; and to induce Chilperic to acknowledge his claim to the office of major-domus in Austrasia, "that the blood of so many noble Franks might not be shed."[1] Carl himself can have expected no other fruit from these overtures than the convincing of his own followers of the unreasonableness of their enemies. The Neustrian king and his evil adviser rejected the proferred terms with indignation, and declared their intention of taking from Carl even that portion of his inheritance which had already fallen into his hands. Both sides then prepared for battle;-Carl, as we are expressly told, having first communicated to the chief men in his camp the haughty and threatening answer of the king. Chilperic relied on his great superiority in numbers, though his army was drawn, for the most part, from the dregs of the people: Carl prepared to meet him with a small but highly-disciplined force of well-armed and skilful warriors. In the battle which ensued on the 21st of March, the Neustrians were routed with tremendous loss, and pursued by the victors to the very gates of Paris. But Carl was not yet in a condition to keep possession of Neustria, and he therefore led his army back to Cologne, and ascended the "throne of his kingdom," as the an-

[1] Annal. Mett. an. 717.

nalist already calls it, the *dignissimus hæres* of his mighty father.[1]

The unfortunate Chilperic, unequal as he must have felt himself to cope with a warrior like Carl, was once more induced by evil counsellors to renew the war. With this view he sought the alliance of the imperfectly subjected neighbouring states, whom the death of Pepin had awakened to dreams of independence. Of these the foremost was Aquitaine, which had completely emancipated itself from Frankish rule. The Aquitania of the Roman empire extended, as is well known, from the Pyrenees to the river Loire. This country, at the dissolution of the Western Empire, had fallen into the hands of the Visigoths, and was subsequently conquered, and to a certain extent subjugated, by the earlier Merovingians. But, though nominally part of the Frankish empire, it continued to enjoy a semi-independence under its native dukes, and remained for many ages a stone of offence to the Frankish rulers. Its population, notwithstanding the admixture of German blood consequent on the Gothic conquest, had remained pre-eminently Roman in its character, and had attained in the seventh century to an unusual degree of wealth and civilisation. The southern part of Aquitaine had been occupied by a people called Vascones or Gascons, who extended themselves as far as the Garonne, and had also submitted to the Frankish rule during the better days of the elder dynasty.

[1] Annal. Mett.

The temporary collapse of the Frankish power consequent upon the bloody feuds of the royal house, and the struggle between the seigniors and the crown, enabled Eudo, the Duke of Aquitaine, to establish himself as a perfectly independent Prince; and he and his sons ruled in full sovereignty over both Aquitaine and Gascony, and were called indifferently *Aquitaniæ* or *Vasconiæ duces*.

Under these circumstances, it is not to be wondered at that Eudo should gladly receive the presents and overtures made to him by Chilperic; who agreed to leave him in quiet possession of the independence he had contumaciously asserted, on condition of his making cause against the Austrasian mayor.[1] He lost no time in leading an army of Gascons to Paris, where he joined his forces to those of Chilperic, and prepared to meet the terrible foe. Carl advanced with his usual rapidity, and having laid waste a portion of Neustria, came upon the enemy in the neighbourhood of Soissons. The new allies, who had scarcely had time to consolidate their union and mature their plans, appear to have made but a feeble resistance; and Chilperic, not considering himself safe even in Paris, fled with his treasures, in company with Eudo, into Aquitaine.[2] Raginfried, the Neustrian major-domus, who with a division of the combined army had also made an attempt to check Carl's progress, was likewise defeated and compelled

1 Fred. Chron. Cont. cvii.

2 Chron. Moissiac. an. 717. Reginonis Chron. (Monum. Germ. tom. i.)

to resign his mayoralty; as a compensation for which he received from the placable conqueror the countship of Anjou.

The victorious Austrasians pursued the fugitives as far as the river Loire and Orleans, from which place Carl sent an embassy to Eudo, and offered him terms of peace, on condition of his delivering up Chilperic and his treasures. It is difficult to say what answer Eudo, hemmed in as he was on all sides (for the Saracens were in his rear), might have given to this demand, — whether he would have consulted his own interests, or his duty to his ally and guest. But the opportune death of Clotaire, whom Carl had made king of Austrasia after the battle of Ambleve, relieved him from his dilemma. Carl, who was remarkably free from the evil spirit of revenge, declared his readiness to acknowledge Chilperic II. as king, on condition of being himself appointed major-domus of the united kingdoms of Austrasia, Neustria, and Burgundy. These terms, offered by the victor to one whose very life was at his mercy, could not but be eagerly accepted[1]; and thus, in A.D. 719, Carl became nominally Mayor of the Palace to King Chilperic II., but, in fact, undisputed master of the king himself and the whole Frankish empire.

The temperate course pursued by Carl in these transactions, proceeded in a great measure from the natural moderation of his character; but it was a

[1] Fred. Chron. Cont. an. 720. Annal. Mett.

course which the coolest calculation would suggest. He was indeed victorious, but he was still surrounded by enemies who were rather beaten than subdued, and many of them were those of his own household.

After the death of Rathod, the "cruel and pagan" king of the Frisians, in A.D. 719, Carl recovered the western portion of Friesland, and reduced the Frisians to their former state of uncertain subjection.[1] About the same time he repelled the Saxons, those unwearied and implacable enemies of the Frankish name, who had broken into the Frankish *gaus* on the right bank of the Rhine. We know little of the particulars of these campaigns, since the chroniclers content themselves with recording in general terms that the "invincible Carl" was always victorious, and his enemies utterly destroyed; a statement which is rendered suspicious by the fact that their annihilation has to be repeated frequently, and at no long intervals.

In the year after the Saxon campaign (the date of which is rather uncertain), Carl crossed the Rhine, and attacked the Alemanni (in Wirtemberg) in their own country, which he devastated without any serious opposition. Subsequently, about A. D. 725, he crossed the Danube, and entered the country of the Bavarians; and after two successful campaigns obliged that nation also to acknowledge their allegiance to the Franks. From this expedition, says the chronicler,

[1] Annal. Mett.

"he returned by the Lord's assistance to his own dominions with great treasures and a certain matron, by name Plectrude, and her niece Sonihilde." [1] This latter, who is called by Einhard "Swanahilde, the niece of Odilo," subsequently became one of Carl's wives, and the mother of the unfortunate Gripho.

It seems natural to conjecture, that Carl had an important ulterior object before his mind in these extraordinary and sustained exertions. They were but the prelude to the grand spectacle soon to be presented to an admiring world, in which this mighty monarch with the humble name was to play a conspicuous and glorious part. A contest awaited him, which he must long have foreseen with mingled feelings of eagerness and apprehension, and into which he dared not go unprepared; a contest which required the highest exercise of his own active genius, and the uncontrolled disposal of all the material resources of his empire. He had hitherto contended for his hereditary honours against his personal enemies — for the supremacy of the Germans over the Gallo Romans, of his own tribe over kindred German tribes — and finally, for order and good government against anarchy and faction. Hereafter he was to renew the old struggle between the West and East—to be the champion of Christianity and German Institutions, against the false and degrading faith of Mohammed, and all the corrupting and enervating habits of the oriental world.

[1] Annal. Mett. Fred. Chron. Cont. cviii. "*Bilitrude.*"

The most sober history of the rise and progress of Islamism, and the Arabian empire, which was founded on it, has all the characteristics of an eastern fable. In the beginning of the seventh century, an Arabian of the priestly house of Haschem retired into a cave at Mecca, to brood over the visions of a powerful but morbid imagination. The suggestions of his own distempered mind, and the impulses of his own strong will, were mistaken for the inspiration and the commands of the Almighty, concerning whom his notions were in part adopted from the *Jewish* and *Christian* Scriptures. He learned to regard himself as the chosen instrument of God, for the introduction of a new faith and the establishment of a power, before which all the nations of the earth should bow. When his meditations had assumed consistency, he shaped them into a system of faith and practice, which he confidently proposed for the acceptance of mankind, as the most perfect and glorious expression of the divine mind and will. His belief in himself, in his own infallibility, and the perfection of his system, was so absolute, that he regarded all other men in the light of children, who, if they cannot be persuaded, must be forced, into the right path. The sword was the only logic he considered suitable to the case; and death or the Koran was the sole alternative which his followers thought fit to offer.

For a time the lofty pretensions of the prophet were acknowledged only by a few, and those few belonged to his own family. But his system, springing as it did from an eminently oriental mind,

was wonderfully adapted to the wants and tastes of oriental nations. The only true and valuable parts of it, indeed, are mutilated shreds from the covenants of Abraham and Moses and the Revelation of our blessed Saviour; but while the sublimity of these afforded suitable objects of contemplation to the nobler faculties of the soul, the strongest passions of fallen human nature, pride, revenge, and lust, were not denied their appropriate gratification. What could be more acceptable to the natural man than a system which quiets the conscience amidst the excesses of sensual love, which takes away the necessity for self-discipline by the doctrine of fatalism, which teaches men to look down with a lofty contempt upon all who think differently from themselves, and, lastly, holds out as a reward for the coercion and destruction of opponents an eternity of voluptuous enjoyment in the society of celestial courtezans? Much no doubt was done by the sword of the hardy and impetuous sons of Ishmael, but this could not alone have spread the Koran over half the world; the very faults which make it odious in Christian eyes, gave wings to its progress, and excited in its favour a deep and frenzied devotion.

In A. D. 622, Mohammed was obliged to flee to Medina, from the virulent opposition of the members of his own tribe. Within ninety years from that time his successors and disciples had conquered and converted, not Arabia alone, but Syria, Persia, Palestine, Phœnicia, Egypt, Asia Minor, Armenia, the country between the Black Sea and the Caspian, a portion of

India, and the whole of the North of Africa from the Nile to the Atlantic Ocean.

The year A. D. 710 found them gazing with longing eyes across the straits of Gibraltar, eager for the time when they might plant upon the rock of Calpe the meteor standard of their prophet; and thence survey the beautiful and fertile country which was soon to be their own. Nor were their hopes deferred: their entrance into Spain, which might have proved difficult if not impossible to effect in the face of a brave and united people, was rendered safe and easy by treachery, cowardice, and theological dissensions.

The first collision, indeed, of the Arabian conquerors with the warriors of the West was rather calculated to damp their hopes of European conquest. The Visigothic kings of Spain possessed the town of Ceuta on the African coast, of which Count Julian, at the time of which we speak, was military governor. The skill and courage of this great warrior and his garrison, had hitherto frustrated all the attempts of Musa, the general of the Caliph Walid, to make himself master of the place. The Saracens were already beginning to despair of success, when they suddenly received overtures from Count Julian himself, who now offered, not merely to open the gates of Ceuta, but to procure for the Saracens a ready admittance into Spain. The grounds of this sudden treachery on the part of one who had risked his life at the post of honour, cannot be stated with any degree of certainty. By some it was ascribed to the desire of avenging himself upon Roderic, his king,

who is said to have abused his daughter[1]; and by others to the fact that he had espoused the cause of Witiza's sons, at that time pretenders to the Spanish throne. The Saracen general Musa, delighted to have found the Achilles-heel of Europe, immediately despatched a few hundred Moslems across the strait, under the command of Tarik; from whom the modern Gibraltar (Gebel-al-Tarik) derives its name. These adventurers were well received in the town and castle of Count Julian at Algesiras, and soon returned to their expectant comrades, with rich booty and exciting tales of the fertility of the country, and the effeminacy of the degenerate Goths.

In the April of the following year, A. D. 711, a body of 5000 Saracens effected a landing on the coast of Spain, and entrenched themselves strongly near the Rock of Gibraltar. These were soon followed by other troops, until a considerable Moslem army was collected on the Spanish shores. The feeble resistance made to this descent was a fatal omen for the empire of the Visigoths. This once brave and hardy tribe of Germans had lost, during a long peace, the valour and endurance to which they

[1] Roderici Ximenes Navarri, Arch. Tolet. Res. Hispan. lib. iii. c. 19. *Johan. Marianæ Res. Hisp.* lib. vi. 21, 22. (Moguntiæ, 1605): "In his Juliani Comitis filia, Cava nomine, in obsequiis Reginæ Egilonæ, erat excellenti formæ dignitate. Hæc aliquando cum æqualibus ludens, corpus cum magna ex parte nudasset, Regis animum forte fortuna clam ex fenestra prospicientis vehementer perculit . . . . Ita opportunitatem nactus, quam neque gratia flectere, neque nimis et metu frangere potuit, invitam atque reluctantem virginem vitiavit."

owed the rich provinces of Spain; and, amidst the pleasures of that luxurious country, had grown so unaccustomed to the use of arms, that it was long before they could be roused to meet the foe. At length, however, the unwarlike Roderic, having collected an army four times as great as that of the enemy, but without confidence either in their leader or themselves, encamped at Xeres de la Frontera, in the neighbourhood of Cadiz.[1] While awaiting at this place the approach of the enemy, the Gothic king is represented as sitting in an ivory chariot, arrayed in silken garments unworthy of a man even in time of peace, and wearing a golden crown upon his head. The battle which quickly followed was fought on the 26th of July, A. D. 731. It was of short duration and of no doubtful issue. The timid herd of Goths, scarcely awaiting the wild charge of the Saracens, turned and fled in irretrievable confusion. Roderic himself, fit leader of such an army, was among the first to leave the field on the back of a fleet racer, which had been placed, at his desire, in the neighbourhood of his tent, as if his trembling heart had foreseen the issue.

The Visigothic empire in Spain fell by a single blow. Tarik advanced with his victorious army as far as Cordova, which immediately yielded at his summons; and he would, without doubt, have overrun the whole of Spain, had he not been recalled by the jealousy of Musa, who reserved for himself the glory of completing the splendid conquest.

[1] Chron. Moissiac.

Of all the Spanish towns which were captured on this occasion, Seville and Merida alone appear to have upheld the ancient glories of the Gothic name; but even these were finally reduced, and the last remnants of the Visigoths were driven from the rich plains they had so long possessed into the mountains of Asturias. It was in these rugged solitudes, and amidst the hardships and privations which they there endured, that they regained their ancient vigour, and preserved their Christian faith. It was thence that at a later period they descended upon their Moorish foes, and in many a hard-fought battle, the frequent theme of ballad and romaunt, recovered, step by step, the fair possessions which their ancestors had won and lost.

And thus by a single victory Spain was added to the vast dominions of the Caliph, and the Cross once more retired before the Crescent. Nor did it seem that the Pyrenees, any more than the rock of Gibraltar, were to prove a barrier to the devastating flood of Islamism. About A. D. 718, Zama, the Arabian Viceroy of Spain, made himself master of that portion of Gaul, on the slopes of the Eastern Pyrenees, of which the Goths had hitherto retained possession. In A. D. 731 he stormed Narbonne, the capital of the province, and having put all the male inhabitants capable of bearing arms to the sword, he sent away the women and children into captivity. He then pushed forward into Aquitaine, and laid siege to Toulouse, which proved the limit of his progress; for it was there that he was defeated by

Eudo, the duke of the country, who was roused to a desperate effort by the danger of his capital.[1] The check thus given to the onward march of the Moslems was of short duration. Ambiza, the successor of Zama, about four years afterwards once more made a movement in advance. Taking a more easterly direction, he stormed and plundered Carcassonne and Nismes; and having devastated the country as far as the Rhone, returned laden with booty across the Pyrenees.[2]

Duke Eudo of Aquitaine, deprived of the fruits of his single victory, resigned all hopes of successfully resisting the invaders, and endeavoured to preserve himself from utter ruin by an alliance with his formidable foes. He is even said to have so far belied his character of Christian prince as to give his own daughter in marriage, or concubinage, to Munuz, the governor of the newly-made Gallic conquests.[3]

It appears that the expeditions of the Saracens into Gaul had been hitherto made by individual generals on a comparatively small scale, and on their own responsibility. The unusually slow progress of their arms at this period, is to be ascribed less to any fear of opposition, than to inward dissensions in the Arabian empire, and a rapid succession of caliphs singularly unlike in their characters and views. Nine short years (A. D. 715—724,) had

[1] Roderic. Hist. Arab. c. 11.
[2] Chron. Moissiac. an. 725.
[3] Marca de Marc. Hispan. ii. c. 3.

seen the cruel Soliman succeeded by the severe, yet just and upright Omar, the luxurious Epicurean Yesid, and the little-minded, calculating Hescham.

It is probable, therefore, that, amid more pressing anxieties and interests, the distant conquest of Spain was forgotten or neglected by the court at Damascus; and that the generals, who commanded in that country, were apt to indulge in ideas inconsistent with their real position as satraps and slaves of an imperial master. But a change was at hand, and the new actor Abderrahman, who suddenly appeared upon the scene with an army of 400,000 men, was charged with a twofold commission, — to chastise the presumption of Munuz, whose alliance with Eudo was regarded with suspicion, — and to bring the whole of Gaul under the sceptre of the Caliph and the law of Mohammed. Regarding Munuz as a rebel and a semi-apostate, Abderrahman besieged him in the town of Cerdagne[1], to which he fled for refuge, and, having driven him to commit suicide, sent his head, together with his wife, the daughter of Eudo, as a welcome present to the Caliph Hescham.[2]

The victorious Saracens then marched on past Pampeluna, and, making their way through the narrow defiles on the western side of the Pyrenean

[1] "*Cerritanense oppidum.*"—*Chron. Isidor.* (Bouq. ii. p. 720.)

[2] Roderic. Hist. Arab. c. 13. Ex *Chron. Isidori*, an. 731. (Bouquet, ii.): "Rebellem immisericorditer insequitur." Munuz meets with no pity from the Episcopal Chronicler. His fate befell him, "judicio Deo," because he was "drunk with the blood of Christians," and was already "*satis damnatus ab hoc*" that he had burnt Bishop Anambadus. Annal. Mett. ad an. 732.

chain, poured down upon the plains with their innumerable hosts as far as the river Garonne. The city of Bordeaux was taken and sacked, and still they pressed on impetuously and without opposition, until they reached the river Dordogne, where Eudo, burning with rage at the treatment which his daughter had received, made a fruitless attempt to stop them. Irritated rather than checked by his feeble efforts, the overwhelming tide poured on. The standard of the Prophet soon floated from the towers of Poitiers, and even Tours, the city of the holy St. Martin, was in danger of being polluted by the presence of insulting infidels, when, in the hour of Europe's greatest dread and danger, the champion of Christendom appeared at last, to do battle with the hitherto triumphant enemies of the Cross.[1]

It seems strange at first sight that the danger, which had so long been threatening Europe from the side of Spain, should not have called forth an earlier and more effectual resistance from those whose national and religious existence was at stake. Abderrahman had now made his way into the very centre of modern France; had taken and plundered some of the wealthiest towns in the Frankish empire; and, after burning or desecrating every Christian church he met with, was marching on the hallowed sanctuary of the patron saint, enriched by the offerings of ages; without encountering a single foe who could even hope to stay his progress. Where was the "invincible"

[1] Fred. Chron. Cont. cviii. Ex Chron. Isidori.

and ubiquitous Carl, who was wont to fall like a thunderbolt upon his enemies? We might indeed be surprised at his seeming tardiness, did we not know the extraordinary difficulties with which he had to struggle, and the seemingly impossible task he had to perform. It was not with the modern superstition of Mohammed alone that he had to contend, but with the hoary heathenism of the North; not with the Saracens alone, but with his barbarous kinsmen—with nations as hardy and warlike as his own Austrasian warriors, and animated no less than the followers of Mohammed with an indomitable hatred of the Christian name. Enemies were ready to pour upon him from every side, from the green slopes of the Pyrenees and over the broad waters of the Rhine; nor could he reckon upon the fidelity of all who lay within these boundaries.

During the whole of the ten years in which the Saracens were crossing the Pyrenees and establishing themselves in Gaul, Carl was constantly engaged in wars with his German neighbours. In that short period he made campaigns against the Frisians, the Swabians, and the Bavarians, the last of whom (as we have seen) he even crossed the Danube to attack in their own country. As late as A. D. 728, when Abderrahman must have been already meditating his desolating march, Carl had to turn his arms once more against the Saxons; and in A. D. 731, the very year before he met the Saracens at Poitiers, he marched an army into Aquitaine to quell the rebellion of Duke Eudo.

Such were some of the adverse circumstances under which Carl had to make his preparations, and under which he encamped with his veterans in the neighbourhood of Poitiers, where, for the first time in his life, he beheld the white tents of the Moslem invaders, covering the land as far as the eye could reach.

We cannot doubt that he had long been looking forward to this hour with an anxious though intrepid heart, for all depended upon him; and that the wars in which he had lately been engaged, were the more important in his eyes, because their successful termination was necessary to secure his rear, and increase the limits of his war-ban when the time for action should arrive.

The hitherto unconquered Saracens, who had carried the banner of their Prophet in almost uninterrupted triumph from the deserts of Arabia to the banks of the Loire, were destined to find at last an insuperable barrier in the brave hearts of Carl and his Austrasian followers.

On a Sunday, in the month of October, A. D. 732, after trying each other's strength in skirmishes of small importance during the whole of the previous week, the two armies, invoking respectively the aid of Christ and Mohammed, came to a general engagement on the plains between Poitiers and Tours. The rapid onslaught of the Ishmaelites, by which they were accustomed to bear everything before them, recoiled from the steady valour and iron front of the Franks, whose heavy swords made dreadful havoc among their lightly clad opponents. Repulsed, but

unbroken in courage and determination, resolved to force their way through that wall of steel or to dash themselves to death against it, the gallant Moslems repeated their wild charges until sunset. At every repulse their blood flowed in torrents, and at the end of the day they found themselves farther than ever from the goal, and gazed upon far more dead upon the slippery field than remained alive in their ranks. Hopeless of being able to renew the contest, they retreated in the night, and, for the first time, fled before an enemy. On the following morning, when the Franks again drew up in battle-array, the camp of the foe was discovered to be empty, so that, instead of awaiting the attack, they had the more agreeable task of plundering the tents and pursuing the fugitives. Abderrahman himself was found among the dead, and around him, according to the not very credible account of the chroniclers, lay 300,000 of his soldiers; while the Franks lost only 1500 men.[1]

Eudo, who, after his defeat on the Dordogne, had taken refuge with his more merciful enemy Carl, was present in the battle and took part in the pursuit and plunder. It was after this glorious triumph over the most formidable enemies of his country and religion that Carl received the surname of Martel (the

[1] "Ut in Epistola ab Eudone missa Gregorio Papæ de eadem victoria continetur." — *Reginon. Chron.* Conf. Fredeg. Chron. Cont. cviii. Chron. Moissiac. an. 732. Annal. Mett. an. 732. Ex Chron. Isidor. an. 732. Paull. Diacon. vi. 46. This writer says that the Saracens lost 375,000!

hammer), by which he has since been known in history.[1]

The importance of this victory to all succeeding ages has often been enlarged upon, and can hardly be exaggerated. The fate of Europe, humanly speaking, hung upon the sword of the Frankish mayor; and but for Carl, and the bold German warriors who had learned the art and practice of war under him and his glorious father, the heart of Europe might even now be in the possession of the Moslem; and the Mosque and the Harem might stand where now we see the spire of the Christian church, and the home of the Christian family.

Though an effective check had been given to the progress of the Saracen arms, and they themselves had been deprived of that chief support of fanatic valour, — the belief in their own invincibility, — yet their power was by no means broken, nor was Carl in a condition to improve his victory. The Neustrians and Burgundians were far from being reconciled to the supremacy which the German Franks had acquired over themselves under the mighty Carlovingian mayors. Their jealousy of Carl Martel's success and their hatred of his person, were so much stronger than their zeal in the cause of Christendom, that even while he was engaged in his desperate conflict with the Saracens, they were raising a rebellion in his rear. But the indefatigable warrior was not sleeping on the fresh laurels he had won. No sooner had he

1 Vita S. Sigebert. c. iv. Ex Ademari Chron. an. 732. (Bouquet, ii. pp. 641, 642.)

received intelligence of their treacherous designs, than he led his troops, fresh from the slaughter of the Infidels, into the very heart of Burgundy, and inflicted a terrible retribution on his domestic foes. He then removed all whom he had reason to suspect from their posts of emolument and honour, and bestowed them upon men on whom he could depend in the hour of danger.[1]

In the following year, A. D. 734, he made considerable progress in the subjugation and, what was even more difficult, the conversion of the Frisians, who hated Christianity the more because it was connected in their minds with a foreign yoke. The preaching of Boniface was powerfully seconded by the sword of Carl, who attacked them by land and sea, defeated their Duke, Poppo, destroyed their heathen altars, and, like our own Alfred in the case of the Danes, gave them the alternative of Christianity or death.[2]

After the victory of Poitiers, Carl had entrusted the defence of the Pyrenean borders to Duke Eudo, whom he left in peaceable though dependent possession of his territories. Eudo had received a rough lesson from his former misfortunes, and passed the remainder of his life in friendly relations with his

[1] Fredeg. Chron. Cont. cix. Annal. Mett. an. 734.

[2] *Epist. S. Bonifacii*, xii., *ad Daniel. Episc.*: "Sine patrocinio Principis Francorum nec Populum regere, nec Presbyteros vel Diaconos, Monachos, vel ancillas Dei defendere possum, nec ipsos paganorum ritus et sacrilegia idolorum in Germania sine illius mandato et timore prohibere valeo."

Frankish liege lord. At the death of Eudo, in A. D. 735, a dispute arose between his sons, Hunold and Hatto, respecting the succession; and it seems that in the course of their contest they had forgotten their common dependence upon Carl Martel. A feud of this nature at such a period, and in the immediate neighbourhood of the Saracens, was highly dangerous to Aquitaine and the whole Frankish empire. Carl therefore lost no time in leading an army into the distracted province, to settle the disputes of the contending parties, and bring the population into a more complete state of subjection. Having advanced to the Garonne and taken the city of Bordeaux, he entered into negotiations with Hunold; and, "with his accustomed piety," conferred the duchy upon him, on condition of his renewing his father's oath of fealty to himself and his two sons, whom he thus distinctly pointed out to the Franks as their hereditary rulers.[1]

In A. D. 737, the infidels were once more introduced into the south of Gaul by the treachery of Christians. A man of influence in Provence, called Maurontus, who probably aimed at an independent dukedom, formed a strong party among the Neustrian seigniors against the detested German mayor.[2] As the Arabian alliance was the only one which could sustain them in a conflict with Carl, they made no scruple of inviting Ibn Jussuf, the new viceroy of

1 Annal. Mett. an. 735.

2 Fredeg. Chron. Cont. cix. an. 737. Annal. Mett. an. 737 and 739. Vales. Franc. xxiv. p. 500.

Septimania (Languedoc), into their country and giving him the city of Avignon as a pledge of their sincerity. The Saracens, instructed by their strange allies, passed into Burgundy, where the party opposed to Carl was strongest: having taken Vienne, they covered the country as far as Lyons with their wild and rapid cavalry, which everywhere left its traces of fire and blood.

The advance of the Saracens was so sudden, and their progress so rapid, that Carl Martel was not immediately prepared to meet them. He therefore despatched his brother Childebrand and his principal seigniors, with such forces as were ready, to keep the enemy in check; determining himself to follow with a numerous and well appointed army. When the advanced guard of the Franks arrived near Avignon, the Saracens retreated into that place, and prepared to stand a siege. On the arrival of Carl the town, which had resisted Childebrand, was taken by storm, and the Arabian garrison put to the sword. The Franks then crossed the Rhone, and marched through Septimania to Narbonne—a place of great importance to the Saracens, who had made it a magazine for their arms. It was defended at this time by Athima, viceroy of the Caliph in Septimania, with a considerable force. The Saracens of Spain, fearing that the garrison might be insufficient to withstand the assault of the Franks (who had invested the town on every side), fitted out a fleet, and transported a body of troops to the mouth of the river Berre (near Narbonne), in hopes of raising the siege. This movement did not escape the quick eye of

Carl; who, leaving his brother with a division of the besiegers, fell with the remainder on the newly landed force of the enemy, and routed them with dreadful slaughter. He failed, however, in his attempts upon Narbonne, which remained in the hands of the Saracens; while Bezières, Agde, Megalone, and Nismes, together with all the territory on the north side of the river Aude (subsequently known as Languedoc), were reunited to the Frankish Empire.

According to Paullus Diaconus, Carl Martel was assisted on this occasion by Luitprand, King of the Langobards in Italy, with whom he had formed a close alliance and friendship.[1] We have hardly sufficient grounds for believing that the Langobards took an active part in this war, but the mere expectation of their approach may have exercised some influence in bringing about the results above described.

The activity of his enemies in the north again prevented Carl from pursuing his advantages against the Moslems, who might perhaps, had German Europe been united, have even then been driven back to the shores of Africa. In A. D. 737 we find the indefatigable warrior employed in repelling and avenging a fresh inroad of the Saxons, whom he defeated with great slaughter and drove along the river Lippe. In A. D. 739 he again appeared in Burgundy, where his

[1] Paull. Diac. Gest. Longob. vi. c. 53. Carl sent his son Pepin to Luitprand at Pavia, that the Lombard king, "*juxta morem*," might cut off his first hair, — an especial mark of friendship and honour. Conf. Juvenal. Sat. iii. 186.

presence had become necessary to stamp out the smouldering embers of the old conspiracy.[1]

In the meantime a new theatre was preparing for the Franks, on which they were destined by Providence to play a very conspicuous and important part. The exertions and influence of Boniface the great apostle of Germany, and the intimate religious union he had effected between the Frankish Church and the Bishops of Rome, were to produce for both parties still richer fruits than had yet appeared. To understand the circumstances which brought them into closer external relations, corresponding to the increased intimacy of their spiritual union, it will be necessary to make ourselves acquainted with the state of Italy at this period; and more especially with the very singular and anomalous position of the Bishops of Rome.

That devoted land, as if in penance for the long and selfish tyranny it had exercised over the world, had become the prey, in turn, of almost every barbarous tribe of Europe; but was at this period nominally subject to the Emperors of the East. The victories of Narses, in A. D. 534, had destroyed the power of the Ostrogoths, which, under the great and good Theoderic, had seemed so firmly established; and Italy was now a province of the Roman Empire, instead of being, as formerly, its centre and head. It was governed for the Byzantine court by a viceroy styled Exarch, whose residence was at Ravenna, on the eastern coast. The court and people of Con-

[1] Annal. Metten. an. 739.

stantinople, however, were too feeble to retain for any length of time a conquest, which they owed solely to the genius of a fortunate general. About thirty years after the defeat of the Goths, when the valiant eunuch had ceased to defend what he had won, the Langobards and 20,000 Saxons, descending upon Italy from the Julian Alps, expelled the Romans from the greater portion of their recent conquests, and confined them to the narrow limits of the Exarchate. The empire which the Langobards at this time established was greatly weakened by its division into several Duchies, the rulers of which were in constant strife with one another and with the central government. We may judge of the extent and consequences of these internal dissensions from the fact that, after the assassination of King Kleph (A.D. 574), the Langobards in Italy remained without a king for ten years, and were subject to thirty-six dukes, each of whom "reigned in his own city." The most powerful of these were the Dukes of Benevento, Friuli, and Spoleto.[1] At the end of this period the royalist party—favoured, no doubt, by the great mass of the people, to whom nothing is so hateful as a *petty* tyrant—once more obtained the ascendancy, and compelled the revolted dukes to swear fealty to Authari, surnamed Flavius, son of the murdered Kleph.[2] The reunion of the Langobards under one head was naturally followed by a further extension of their borders at the expense of the Roman empire; and this extension was the im-

[1] Paull. Diacon. ii. 31, 32. [2] Ibid. iii. 16.

mediate cause of a collision between the kings of the Langobards and the successors of St. Peter, which gave rise to the most important and lasting results.

The Bishops of Rome had, in the meantime, been adding to the spiritual influence they owed to their position as heads of the Church in the great capital of the West, the material resources of extensive possessions, and numerous and devoted vassals. Like all other dignified ecclesiastics within the imperial dominions, the Bishops of Rome were subject to the Greek Emperor[1]; but, as it was mainly by their influence and exertions that the city and duchy of Rome were kept in allegiance to the Greek Emperor, the balance of obligation was generally in favour of the Pontiffs, who, on that account, were treated by the court at Constantinople in a far less arrogant manner than would have been congenial to the pompous sovereigns of the East.

The aggressive attitude of the Langobards, which threatened the Greek Emperors with the loss of the small remnant of their Italian possessions, was calculated to excite no less the apprehensions of the Roman Bishops. It was open to them, indeed, to throw themselves at once into the arms of the Langobardian monarchs, from whose reverence and gratitude they might, no doubt, have acquired a commanding position in Church and State; and it was this ever-present alternative which rendered

[1] Gregory the Great (Opera om. vi. ep. 52.) concludes an epistle "ad Fratres in Angliam euntes" thus: "Data die decima Kal. Aug. *imperante Domino nostro Mauricio Tiberio piissimo Augusto*," &c.

them virtually independent of their nominal sovereigns. Many reasons, however, inclined them to preserve their allegiance to the Byzantine court, or at least to refrain from transferring it to any other potentate. Old associations, and the fear of change, would have their weight in determining the course pursued; but the circumstances which chiefly influenced the Popes in their decision were, in the first place, the distance of Constantinople from Rome, which was favourable to their independence; and, in the next, the declining power and feeble character of the Emperors, which rendered them convenient masters to aspiring vassals.

The evident intention of the Bishops of Rome, to play off the Langobards and the Byzantine court against each other, and to make their own career the resultant of these two opposing forces, seemed, for some time, likely to be entirely frustrated. The iconoclastic controversy, with all its horrible and ridiculous consequences, now began to agitate the Christian world, and gave rise to the bitterest hostility between the great capitals of the East and West, and their respective rulers. The Emperor Leo III., surnamed the Isaurian, disgusted at the idolatrous worship paid by his subjects to the images which filled the churches, issued, in A. D. 726, his famous decree for their destruction. It was then that the independence of thought and action to which the Roman bishops had accustomed themselves was clearly manifested. The Emperor communicated his pleasure respecting the destruction of the images

to the Pope, and claimed from him the same unanswering obedience which he was accustomed to meet with from the Patriarch of Constantinople.[1] But Gregory II., encouraged by the unanimous support of the Italians, who looked to him as the champion of their beloved idols, not only refused, in a letter full of personal abuse, to carry out the wishes of the Emperor, but fulminated a threat of excommunication against all who should dare to lay violent hands upon the images.

After so public a renunciation of his allegiance, we might expect to see the Bishop of Rome avowedly siding with the Langobards, especially as they had forsaken the Arian heresy, and their King Luitprand himself had manifested a very high degree of veneration for St. Peter's chair. But the motives suggested above retained their force, and no such change took place; on the contrary, we are told that when the Italians, "on hearing the wickedness of Leo, formed a plan of electing a new emperor and conducting him to Constantinople," the Pope induced them to forego their purpose and adhere to their former allegiance.[2] Nor is his policy on this occasion

[1] Paull. Diacon. vi. 49.

[2] Epist. Gregor. ii. ad Leon. (ap. Barron. Annal. Ecc. tom. ix. p. 70. Colon. Ag. 1609.) The two letters addressed by Gregory II. to the Emperor were written after 730 A. D. Vid. Gieseler's Kirchengesch. ii. 1 Abth. p. 3. Among other things he tells the emperor: Καὶ τὰ μικρὰ παιδία καταπαίζουσί σου· γύρωσον εἰς τὰς διατριβὰς τῶν στοιχείων καὶ εἰπέ· ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ καταλύτης καὶ διώκτης τῶν εἰκόνων καὶ εὐθὺς τὰς πινακίδας αὐτῶν εἰς τὴν κεφαλήν σου ῥίψουσι, &c. "Even the little children mock

difficult to understand. The Langobards were too near, and the absorption of Rome into their empire would have been too complete to allow the Bishops of Rome free scope for their lofty schemes of ambition. As subjects of King Luitprand, they would have run the risk of sinking from the rank of virtual rulers of the Roman duchy, to that of mere metropolitan bishops. And the danger of this degradation grew every day more urgent. Gregory II. died in the midst of the perplexities arising from his critical position. But the same policy was pursued by his successor Gregory III. with so much determination, that Luitprand, who—whatever may have been his reverence for the spiritual character of his opponent, and liberal as he was towards the Holy See—could

thee! Wander through the elementary schools, and say 'I am the destroyer and the persecutor of the images,' and they will immediately throw their slates at thy head!... Thou hast written, 'Hosiah, King of the Jews (the holy Father means Hezekiah: 2 Kings, xviii. 4.), after 800 years, brought the brazen serpent out of the Temple; and I, after 800 years, have brought the images out of the Churches.' Truly Hosiah was thy brother, and had the same faith, and tyrannised over the priests of that time as thou dost now." (2 Chron. xxvi. 16—18.). Conf. Anastasius, de Vit. Rom. Pontiff. (Romæ, 1718). *Vit. XC. Gregorii II.:* "Cognita vero Imperatoris nequitia, omnis Italia consilium iniit, ut sibi eligerent Imperatorem, et Constantinopolim ducerent. Sed compescuit tale consilium Pontifex, spèrans conversionem Principis. . . . . Sed ne desisterent ab amore vel fide Romani Imperii, admonebat." The ultramontane writers have cited this as an example in which an heretical emperor was deprived of a part of his dominions by the fiat of the Papal Chair. Thus *Baronius*, ad an. 730, sec. 5.: "Sic dignum posteris idem Gregorius reliquit exemplum ne in Ecclesia Christi regnare sinerentur hæretici Principes," &c.

not overlook his intrigues, and was determined to be sole master in Italy, found it necessary to advance upon Romè with a hostile army. The scruples which the pious Langobard may have felt in violating St. Peter's patrimony, must have been greatly relieved by the very secular conduct of Gregory in respect to the king's rebellious vassals. Thrasamund, Duke of Spoleto, having incurred the displeasure of his sovereign, took refuge in Rome; and when Luitprand demanded that he should be given up, the Pope and the *Patricians* of the Romans united in giving a decided refusal.[1] The opposition to Luitprand was further strengthened by the adhesion of Gottschalk, Duke of Benevento, who took up arms against his suzerain; and in an engagement which took place soon after, between the king and his mutinous vassals, Roman troops were seen fighting on the side of the rebels.

Contrary to the hopes and expectations of Gregory, Luitprand was completely victorious; and, justly irritated by the conduct of the Romans, to whom he had shown so much forbearance, immediately led his forces to the very gates of Rome, with the full intention of incorporating it with the rest of his Italian dominions[2]; and thus, with all his foresight, Gregory had brought the rising structure of the papacy into the greatest danger, and appeared to be himself at the mercy of his enemies.

[1] Paull. Diac. vi. 65.

[2] Vit. Zachariæ (Anastas. Vit. Pontif. tom. i. Vit. xcii.).

In this extremity the holy father bethought himself of the powerful and orthodox nation which had for so many ages been the faithful ally of the Catholic Church, and had lately been united in still closer bonds of reverence and amity to St. Peter's chair. In A.D. 739, Pope Gregory III. applied for aid against the Langobards "to his most excellent son, the Subking Carl."[1]

That this application was made unwillingly, and with considerable misgivings about the consequences, may be inferred from the extremities to which Gregory submitted before he made it.

His hesitation was owing, no doubt, in part to his instinctive dread of giving the papal chair a too powerful protector, who might easily become a master; and partly to his knowledge of the sincere friendship which existed between his opponent Luitprand and his desired ally.[2] Of all the circumstances which threatened to prevent the realisation of the papal dreams of temporal independence and spiritual domination, none were so greatly and so justly dreaded as an alliance between the Franks and Langobards; and we shall see that Gregory III. and his successors spared no pains, and shrunk from no means however questionable, to excite jealousy and hatred between the Franks and their Lombard kinsmen.

While the Romans were trembling within their

[1] Fredeg. Chron. Cont. cx. Annal. Mett. an. 741. "Domino excellentissimo filio Carolo *sub regulo*, Gregorius Papa."—*Cod. Carol.* i. (ap. Du Chesne, Hist. Fr. Sc. tom. iii. p. 703.).

[2] De Vit. Gregor. III. (Anastasii Vit. Rom. Pontif., ed. Blanchini, Rom. 1718, tom. i.)

hastily-repaired walls, and awaiting the decisive assault of the Langobards, Carl Martel was resting from the fatigues of his late campaigns in Burgundy; and he was still in that country when the papal envoys reached him. They brought with them a piteous epistle from Gregory, in which he complains with bitterness of the persecutions of his enemies, who, he says, had robbed the very church of St. Peter (which stood without the walls) of its candlesticks; and taken away the pious offerings of the Frankish princes.[1] Carl received the communication of the afflicted Pontiff with the greatest reverence. The interests of the empire, and more especially of his own family, were too intimately connected with the existence and honour of the Bishops of Rome, to allow of his feeling indifferent to what was passing in Italy; and there is no reason to doubt that he entertained the highest veneration for the Head of the Church. Yet this first embassy seems to have justified the fears rather than the hopes of Gregory.[2] The incessant exertions which Carl's enemies compelled him to make for the maintenance of his authority would long ago have destroyed a man of ordinary energy and endurance, and were beginning to tell even upon his iron frame. He was aware that the new order of things, of which he was the principal author, depended for its continuance

[1] Cod. Carol. Ep. i.

[2] "*O quam insanabilis dolor pro his exprobrationibus in nostro retinetur pectore dum tales et tanti filii suam spiritualem matrem, sanctam Dei Ecclesiam .. non conantur defendere!*"

and consolidation solely upon his presence and watchfulness. So far from being in a condition to lead his forces to a distant country, and to make enemies of brave and powerful friends, it was not long since he had sought the assistance of the Langobards themselves; and he knew not how soon he might stand in need of it again. He therefore contented himself with opening friendly negotiations with Luitprand, who excused himself to Carl, and agreed to spare the Papal territory on condition that the Romans should cease to interfere between himself and his rebellious subjects. The exact terms of the agreement made between Gregory and Luitprand, by the mediation of Carl Martel, are of the less moment, as they were observed by neither party. In A. D. 740 the Langobards again appeared in arms before the gates of Rome; and the Pope was once more a suppliant at the Frankish court. In the letter which Carl Martel received on this occasion, Gregory bitterly complains that no effectual aid had been as yet afforded him; that more attention had been paid to the "lying" reports of the Lombard king than to his own statements, and he earnestly implores his "most Christian son" not to prefer the friendship of Luitprand to the love of the Prince of the Apostles.[1] It is evident from the whole

[1] Cod. Carol. Epist. i., ii. It seems but fair to the memory of Luitprand to quote the words of the historian of the Langobards respecting him. "(Luitprand) was a man of great wisdom, wise in council, God-fearing, and a friend of peace. He was powerful in battle, merciful towards sinners, chaste and temperate, watchful in prayer, generous to the poor, unacquainted indeed with the

tenor of this second epistle, that the Frankish mayor had not altered his conduct towards the King of the Lombards, in consequence of Gregory's charges and complaints; but had trusted rather to his own knowledge of his friend than to the invectives of the terrified and angry Pope.

To give additional weight to his written remonstrances and entreaties, Gregory sent the bishop Anastasius and the presbyter Sergius to Carl Martel, charged with more secret and important instructions, which he scrupled to commit to writing. The nature of their communications may be gathered from the symbolical actions by which they were accompanied. The envoys brought with them the keys of St. Peter's sepulchre, which they offered to Carl, on whom they were also empowered to confer the title and dignity of Roman *Patricius*.[1] By the former step—the offer of the keys (an honour never before conferred upon a Frankish ruler)—Gregory expressed his desire to constitute the powerful mayor Protector of the Holy See; and by conferring the rank of Roman Patricius without, as seems probable, the sanction of the Greek Emperor, he in effect withdrew his allegiance from the latter, and acknowledged Carl Martel as liege lord of the Roman duchy and people. It was in this light that the whole transaction was regarded at the

sciences, but worthy of being considered equal to the philosophers, a father of his people and a reformer of the laws."—*Paull. Diacon. Hist. Langob.* lib. vi. cap. 58.

[1] Fredeg. Chron. Cont. cx. (Bouq. tom. ii.). Annal. Mett. an. 741. also mention St. Peter's chains ("*preciosa vincula*") among the offerings.

time, for we read in the chronicle of Moissiac, written in the beginning of the ninth century, that the letter of the Pope was accompanied by "a decree of the Roman Principes;" and that the Roman people, having thrown off the rule of the Greek Emperor, desired to place themselves under the protection of the aforesaid prince, and his invincible clemency."[1]

Carl Martel received the ambassadors with the distinguished honour due to the dignity of the sender, and the importance of their mission; and willingly accepted at their hands the significant offerings they brought. When they were prepared to return, he loaded them with costly presents, and ordered Grimo, the Abbot of Corbey, and Sigebert, a monk of St. Denis, to accompany them to Rome, and bear his answer to Pope Gregory. Rome was once more delivered from destruction by the intervention of Carl, and his influence with Luitprand.

And thus were the last days of the great Frankish hero and Gregory III. employed in marking out a line of policy respecting each other, and the great temporal and spiritual interests committed to them, which, being zealously followed up by their successors, led in the sequel to the most important and brilliant results. They both died nearly at the same time, in the same year (A.D. 741) in which the events above described took place. The restless activity of Carl Martel had prematurely worn him out. Conscious

[1] Chron. Moissiac. an. 741 (ap. Germ. Mon. i. p. 292.).

of the rapid decline of his powers, he began to set his house in order; and he had scarcely time to portion out his vast empire among his sons, and to make his peace with heaven in the church of the patron saint, when he was seized by a fever in his palace at Chiersy, on the Oise; where he died on the 15th (or 21st) of October, A.D. 741, at the early age of fifty. He was buried in the church of St. Denis.[1]

Carl Martel may be reckoned in the number of those great men who have been deprived of more than half the glory due to them, "because they want the sacred poet." Deeds which, in the full light of history, would have appeared sufficient to make a dozen warriors immortal, are despatched by the Frankish chroniclers in a few dry words. His greatness, indeed, shines forth even from their meagre notices; but we feel, as we read them, that had a Cæsar or a Livy unfolded his character and described his exploits,—instead of a poor pedantic monk like Fredegar,—a rival might be found for the Cæsars, the Scipios, and the Hannibals.

We have seen that he inherited little from his father but the hereditary vigour of his race. He began life as the prisoner of an envious stepmother. When he escaped from his prison at Cologne, he was surrounded by powerful enemies; nor could he consider himself safe until, with a force which voluntarily joined his standard, he had defeated three armies larger than his own. His subsequent career was in

[1] Fredeg. Chron. Cont. cx.

accordance with the deeds of his early life. Every step in his onward progress was the result of a contest. He fought his way to the seat of his mighty father. He defeated the Neustrians, and compelled them to receive a sovereign at his hands. He attacked and defeated, in rapid succession, the warlike nations of the Frisians and the Saxons; he refixed the Frankish yoke more firmly upon the necks of the Swabians, the Bavarians, the Aquitanians, and Gascons; and, above all, he stemmed the mighty tide of Moslemism which threatened to engulf the world.

Nor was it with external enemies alone that he had to contend. To the last days of his active life he was engaged in quelling the endless seditions of the great seigniors, who were as impatient of control from above as of opposition from below.

His mighty *deeds* are recorded; but of the manner in which he set about them; of the resources, internal and external, mental and physical, by which he was enabled to perform them; of his personal character and habits; of his usual dwelling-place; of his friends and servants, his occupations, tastes, and habits, we are left in the profoundest ignorance.

The great and important results of his activity were the predominance of the German element in the Frankish empire, the preservation of Europe from Mohammedanism, and the union of the principal German tribes into one powerful State. And all these mighty objects he effected, as far as we are able to judge, chiefly, though not entirely, by the sword. He beat down everything which barred his

course; he crushed all those who dared to oppose him; he coerced the stubbornness of the independent German tribes, and welded them together by terrific and repeated blows. Our prevailing idea of him, therefore, is that of force — irresistible energy; and his popular surname of Martel, or the Hammer, appears a particularly happy one.[1]

The task which he performed was in many respects similar to that of Clovis at an earlier period; but it is not difficult to see that it was performed in a very different spirit. "He is not," says Guizot, "an ordinary usurper. He is the chief of a new people which has not renounced its ancient manners, and which holds more closely to Germany than to Gaul."[2] Though superior to Clovis, even as a warrior, we have no sufficient reason to accuse Carl Martel of being either treacherous or cruel. The incessant wars in which he was unavoidably engaged, necessarily imply a great amount of confusion in the State, and of sacrifice and suffering on the part of the people. And we have sufficient evidence of a direct nature, to show that the usual effects of long-continued wars were severely felt in the Frankish empire. The great mass of the people is seldom honoured by the notice of the Chroniclers, and *never* except in their relation to those

[1] *Annal. Xantenses* (Monum. Germ., ii. p. 221.): "Vir bellicosus, dux invictus, immo victoriosissimus, qui patrios limites transiliens paternasque victorias suis nobiliter exaugens, honestissimos triumphos de ducibus ac regibus, de populis ac barbaris nationibus reportavit."

[2] Guizot, Essais, ii.

for whom they toil and bleed; and we might have been left in blissful ignorance of the cost of Carl Martel's brilliant deeds, had not the coffers of the Church been heavily mulcted to defray it.

Ecclesiastical property, which, at the time we speak of, comprised a large proportion of the land, was exempted, by various immunities and privileges, from bearing its due share of the public burdens. Carl Martel, therefore, to whom a large and constant supply of money was indispensable, was accustomed to make a portion of the wealth of the Church available to the wants of the State. This he effected by bestowing bishoprics and rich benefices on his personal friends and trustiest followers, without much regard to their fitness for the clerical office.[1] It was for this offence that, notwithstanding the support he gave to Boniface and his brother missionaries, and the number of churches which he founded and endowed, he was held up by ecclesiastical writers of a later age as a destroyer of monasteries, "who converted the property of the Church to his own use," and on that account died "a fearful death."[2] More than a hundred years

[1] *Ex Vita S. Rigoberti* (Bouquet, iii. p. 658.): "Et quidem aliis similiter fecit (Carl had deprived Rigobert of his bishopric for opposing him) et eis qui suis partibus faverunt, dedit. De hoc etenim non Rege sed Tyranno, ita legitur ad locum in Annal. Diversorum Regum: 'Iste Carlus omnibus audacior Episcopatus Regni Francorum laicis hominibus et Comitibus primus dedit, ita *ut Episcopis nihil potestatis in rebus Ecclesiarum permitteret.*'"

[2] This passage (which is without doubt an interpolation) is found in the Epistola Bonifacii, 72 ad Ethelbaldum Regem

after Carl's decease (in A. D. 858) Louis, the German, was reminded, by a synod held at Chiersy, of the sins committed by his great ancestor against the Church. "Prince Carl," said the assembled fathers to the king, "the father of Pepin, who was the first among the Frankish kings and princes to alienate and distribute the goods of the Church, was solely on that account eternally damned." They then proceeded to relate the well-known "Visio S. Eucherii," a forgery of Archbishop Hincmar, according to which, Eucherius, bishop of Orleans, having been transported to the other world in a trance, beheld Carl Martel suffering the pains of hell.[1] On his inquiring, of the angel who accompanied him, the reason of what he saw, he was told that the mighty major-domus was suffering the penalty of having seized and distributed the property of the Church. The astonished bishop related what had befallen him to Boniface, and Fulrad the abbot of St. Denis, and repaired in their company to the sepulchre of Carl Martel. On opening the coffin, which was charred on the inside and contained no corpse, a dragon rushed out and made its escape.[2]

(ed. Würdtwein, Mayence, 1789, p. 189., in which Ethelbald is reminded of the melancholy fate of the Kings Ceolred and Osred, who died an early death for having destroyed monasteries. William of Malmesbury has adopted the interpolation of which neither of the above-mentioned editors could find a trace in the most ancient MSS. Vid. Roth, Beneficialwesen, p. 467.

[1] This story is given at full length in the Einhardi Fuldenses Annal. ad an. 738. (Monumenta Germaniæ, tom. i.).

[2] Vita Eucherii. (Bouq. iii. p. 656.). Unfortunately for the cre-

Against these and other harsh judgments of the great hero's character (none of which are earlier than the ninth century), the acrimonious nature of which betrays their source, we may set the respect of his contemporaries, the friendship of Boniface[1] and Pope Gregory, and the fact that he endowed and enriched a great number of religious houses, and was frequently applied to by the Pope to defend St. Peter's chair. That his own necessities, and the excessive wealth and troublesome privileges of the Church, induced him to take measures which operated injuriously on the character of the clergy, cannot be denied; but he proved in many ways that he acted in no hostile spirit to religion or its ministers, but under the pressure of circumstances which he could not control. If he used a portion of the revenues of the Church to pay and equip his soldiers, he led those soldiers against the bitterest enemies of Christendom, the heathen and the Moslem. His lot was cast in the battle-field, but the part which he there performed was useful as well as brilliant. Though evidently a warrior of the highest class—great in the council as in the field—he was not that degraded being, a *mere* warrior. He never seems to have sought war for its own sake, or to have delighted in

dibility of the romantic story, the Vit. Euchar. shows that the dreaming prelate died three years *before* Carl Martel, as is proved by Roth (Beneficialwesen, p. 327.).

[1] *Ex Vita Bonifacii ab Othlone Monacho.* (Bouq. iii. p. 667.): "Hunc (Carlomannum) sanctus Bonif. adiens . . . poposcit ut Ch. Religionis culturam *quam pater ejus in promptissimo animo cepit et excoluit,*" et seq.

bloodshed. He was willing to negotiate with an enemy, even when he felt himself the stronger; and was placable and generous to his bitterest foes. The aid he afforded to Boniface and others in their efforts to convert the heathen, and the sympathy he showed in their success, sufficiently prove that he was not indifferent to religion; and that he could appreciate, not only the brave exploits of the gallant soldier, but the self-sacrificing labours of the zealous missionary.

CHAP. VI.

CARLOMAN AND PEPIN THE SHORT.

A.D. 741—768.

CARL MARTEL left two sons, Carloman and Pepin, by his first wife of whom nothing is known, and a third, Gripho, by the captive Bavarian princess Sunehild, who is sometimes called his second wife and sometimes his concubine. In the first partition of his dominions, which was made known before his death, he apportioned Austrasia, Suabia (Alemannia), and Thuringia, the German provinces, to his eldest son, Carloman; Neustria, Burgundy, and Provence, to Pepin, the chief inheritor of his glory. In this arrangement the son of Sunehild was wisely passed over; but the entreaties of his beautiful spouse induced Carl, at the very end of his life, to set apart a portion from each of the two kingdoms above mentioned for Gripho; an unfortunate step, which only brought destruction on him who received the fatal gift.

The mischievous effects of the new partition

showed themselves immediately. The subjects of Gripho, among whom alone he could look for sympathy and support, were discontented at being arbitrarily separated from the rest of the empire; and the ill-feeling of the seigniors and people in all parts of the country appears to have been enhanced by the prejudice existing against Sunehild, both as a foreigner and on account of the great influence she exercised over the heart of Carl. So strong, indeed, was the feeling of the Franks upon the subject, that we may fairly doubt whether Carloman and Pepin themselves, had they been so inclined, would have been able to secure to their brother the possession of the territory allotted to him.

Whatever sentiments the two eldest brothers previously entertained towards Gripho, they were soon rendered openly hostile by the flight of their sister Hiltrude to the court of Bavaria, and her unauthorised marriage with Odilo, the duke of that country.[1] Sunehild and Gripho, who were naturally looked upon as the instigators of this unwelcome alliance, shut themselves up in the fortress of Laon; but being entirely without resources, they yielded up the place and themselves as soon as Carloman and Pepin appeared with an army before its walls. The favourite wife of the mighty Carl Martel was sent into a nunnery at Chelles, and Gripho was imprisoned in the castle of Neufchâteau, in the forest of Ardennes.[2]

[1] Fredeg. Chron. Cont. cxi. ad an. 742.
[2] Eginhard. Annal. an. 741.

The great importance which the youthful rulers attached to the flight of Gripho and his mother, and the clandestine marriage of Hiltrude, was owing to their knowledge of the troubled state of Bavaria, where a rebellion broke out soon afterwards. Carloman and Pepin, like their forefathers, were called upon, at the very commencement of their reign, to show themselves worthy of the sceptre they had inherited. No sooner was the heavy hand of Carl Martel withdrawn from their necks, than Suabians, Bavarians, and Aquitanians once more flew to arms for the recovery of their independence. Nor can we condemn the proceedings of these warlike tribes as unseasonable, or altogether rash and hopeless. They had no reason to suppose that, contrary to the usual course of nature, the Carlovingian race would go on for ever producing giants like the two first Pepins and Carl Martel; and they knew that it needed a giant's grasp to hold the mighty empire of the Franks together. But the spirit of their father lived in both his sons, as their enemies had soon good reason to know; and any natural hopes the revolted nations may have founded on family dissensions were dispelled by the captivity of Gripho, and the lasting harmony which existed between Carloman and Pepin.

Having placed a Merovingian named Childeric on the throne — which their father for some time before his death had left unoccupied, — the young princes marched an army towards Aquitaine; for Hunold the son of Eudo, the sworn vassal of Carl Martel, had manifested his rebellious intentions by throwing Lantfred,

the Frankish ambassador, into prison. Crossing the Loire, they devastated Aquitania as far as Bourges; and were on the point of overrunning the whole country, when the intelligence of the still more serious rebellion of the Suabians compelled them suddenly to break off their campaign in the south, and return to the heart of their dominions.[1] Preparations of unusual magnitude had been made for the war by the Dukes of Suabia and Bavaria, who had invited the Saxon and Sclavonian tribes to make common cause against the Franks. The sudden return of the Frankish army, however, frustrated their half-completed plans. In the autumn of the same year, Carloman crossed the Rhine, fell upon the Suabian Duke Theobald before his Bavarian allies were ready to take the field, and compelled him to renew his oath of allegiance, and to give hostages for its observance.

In the meantime, Odilo, Duke of Bavaria, the husband of the fugitive Princess Hiltrude, was doing all in his power to strengthen himself against the expected attack of the Franks[2], and was evidently acting in concert with Duke Hunold of Aquitaine. The defeat of the Suabians was a heavy blow to his hopes; but he had gone too far to recede, and having united a body of Saxons and Sclavonian mercenaries with his own subjects, he took up a position on the farther

[1] Fredeg. Chron. Cont. cxi., cxii.
[2] Annal. Metten. an. 743.

side of the river Lech, and stockaded the banks to prevent the enemy from crossing. The Franks came up soon afterwards, but found the Bavarians so strongly entrenched, that they lay fifteen days on the opposite bank without attempting anything. After a diligent search, however, they discovered a ford by which they crossed the river during the night, and, falling on the unsuspecting enemy, put them to flight, and drove them with great slaughter across the river Inn.

The Frankish princes are said to have remained for fifty-two days in the enemies' country; but their expedition partook more of the nature of a foray than a conquest, and left the Bavarians in nearly the same condition of semi-independence in which it had found them. The activity of the revolted tribes rendered it dangerous for Carloman and Pepin to lead their forces too far in any one direction. As Hunold had been saved by the revolt of the Suabians, so Odilo was now relieved from the presence of the Franks by diversions made in his favour in two other quarters; by the Saxons, who had fallen upon Thuringia; and by Hunold, who, emboldened by impunity and the absence of the Franks, had crossed the Loire and was devastating the land as far as Chartres. The Saxons claimed the first attention of the Frankish leaders, since the latter dared not march towards the south with so dangerous an enemy in their rear. Carloman is said to have defeated the Saxon army, which consisted in all probability of undisciplined marauders, in two great battles, and to have carried off one of

their leaders, named Theoderic, into Austrasia.[1] Pepin was, in the meantime, engaged with the Suabians under Theobald, whom he soon reduced to obedience. Having thus, for the time, secured their rear, the brother-warriors marched (in A.D. 745), with united forces, against Hunold, who, conscious of his utter inability to resist their undivided power, laid down his arms without a contest, consented to give hostages, and to renew his brittle oaths of fealty. Disgusted with his ill success, he soon afterwards resigned the government in favour of his son Waifar, and retired into the monastery of St. Philibert, in the island of Rhé, on the coast of Aquitaine.

We cannot fairly number Hunold among the princes of Europe who have resigned their crowns from a real and settled conviction of the worthlessness of all but spiritual goods and honours. The precise motives which actuated him can only be guessed at; but the very last explanation of his conduct to which we should have recourse is that he sought in retirement a more undisturbed communion with God. The same chronicles which record his abdication inform us, that in order to secure the undisputed succession of the vacant throne to his son, he lured his own brother "by false oaths" from Poitiers, and, after putting out his eyes, kept him in strict confinement. Such was his preparation for the monastic life![2]

[1] Annal. Metten. an. 743. Annal. Tilian. an. 743. Reginon. Chron.

[2] Fred. Chron. Cont. cxiv. Annal. Mett. an. 744.

Though it is not easy to discover in what respect the Suabians were more in fault in the war just mentioned than the other revolted nations, it is evident that they incurred the special resentment of their Frankish conquerors. All had broken their allegiance, and had sought to regain by force the independence of which they had been forcibly deprived. Yet while the Bavarians and Aquitanians were merely compelled to renew their engagements on honourable terms, the treatment of the Suabians has left an indelible blot on the character of Carloman.

This brave and once powerful people had retired, after their defeat by Pepin, into the fastnesses of the Alps, but were soon compelled to make their submission, and to resume their former allegiance. In A. D. 746, however, they appear to have meditated a new revolt, and were accused of having incited the Bavarians to try once more the fortune of war. Rendered furious by the seemingly interminable nature of the contest, Carloman appears to have thought himself justified in repaying faithlessness by treachery of a far more heinous nature[1]; and this is the only shadow of an excuse which can be offered for his conduct. Having led his army to Cannstadt in A. D. 746, he ordered Theobald, the Suabian duke, to join him with all his forces, in obedience to the military ban. Theobald obeyed without suspicion, supposing that he should be employed, in conjunction with the rest of Carloman's

[1] Fred. Chron. Cont. cxv.

forces, against some common enemy. "And there," says the chronicler of Metz, "a great prodigy took place, that one army seized and bound another without any of the perils of war!"[1] No sooner had the two armies met together in an apparently friendly manner, than Carloman ordered his Franks to surround the Alemannians (Suabians), and to disarm and bind them. He then instituted an inquiry respecting the aid afforded the Bavarians; and, having seized those chiefs who had assisted Odilo "against the invincible princes, Carloman and Pepin, he *mercifully corrected each according to his deserts.*"[2] Lanfried II. received the vacant throne of Theobald, who, in all probability, was one of those who lost their lives by Carloman's *merciful correction.*

In the following year, the connection between the Carlovingian family and the Roman Church, which had grown continually closer, was still farther strengthened by the voluntary abdication of Carloman, and his admission into the monastic order. The reasons which induced this mighty prince and successful warrior to take so singular a step are quite unknown.[3] Remorse for his recent treachery,

[1] *Annal. Metten.* an. 746.: "Fuitque ibi magnum miraculum, quod unus exercitus alium comprehendit atque ligavit absque ullo discrimine belli."

[2] "Misericorditer correxit."

[3] Vit. S. Zachariæ. (Vit. xciii. Anastasius, tom. i.) *Einhardi Vit. Carol. Mag.* cap. ii.: "Incertum quibus de causis, tamen videtur quod amore conversationis contemplativæ succensus. . . . ." Fredeg. Chron. Cont. cxvi. *Chron. Moissiac.*: "Divino amore et desiderio cælestis patriæ compunctus sponte

—disgust at the bloodshed he had caused and witnessed, — the sense of inferiority to his brother Pepin, and doubts as to the continuance of fraternal harmony,—a natural tendency to religious contemplation increased by the influence of Boniface, whose earnest faith and spotless life could not but make a deep impression upon all who knew him;—these and other causes will occur to the mind of every one as being, singly or in different combinations, adequate to the result. Yet we can but guess at motives which were unknown to the generations immediately succeeding him, and which he himself perhaps would have found it difficult to define.

With the full concurrence of his brother Pepin, whose appetite for worldly honours was by no means sated, Carloman set out for Rome with a numerous retinue of the chief men in his kingdom, taking with him magnificent presents for the Pope. He was received by Zachary with great distinction; and by his advice Carloman vowed obedience to the rules of St. Benedict before Optatus, the Abbot of Monte Casino, and founded a monastery to St. Sylvester on the classic heights of Mount Soracte. But he was far too much in earnest in his desire of solitude to find the neighbourhood of Rome a suitable or agreeable residence. The newly founded monastery was soon thronged with curious visitors, eager to behold the princely monk who had given up all to follow

regnum reliquit." Annal. Metten. an. 747. contain a strange story of Carloman's humility and penitence. He calls himself "peccatorem et homicidam."

Christ. He therefore abandoned Mount Soracte, and, concealing as far as possible his name and rank, enrolled himself among the Benedictine monks of Monte Casino.

As no stipulation had been made in favour of Carloman's son Drogo, Pepin now became sole ruler of the whole Frankish empire. It is a no less singular than pleasing fact—that one of the very first uses which Pepin made of his undivided authority was to release his brother Gripho from his long imprisonment; singular, because it seems to imply that Carloman, whose susceptibility to religious influences cannot be doubted, was the only obstacle to this act of generosity and mercy. It is indeed open to us to suppose that Carloman foresaw more clearly than his brother the injurious consequences of Gripho's restoration to freedom; for the policy of this step was certainly more questionable than its generosity. The liberated prince thought more of what was withheld than of what was granted, and had never ceased to consider himself entitled to an equal share of the dominions of his father. In A. D. 748, not long after his release, while Pepin was holding a council of the bishops and seigniors at Düren, Gripho was forming a party among the younger men to support his pretensions to the throne. In company of some of these he fled to the Saxons, who were always ready to make common cause against the hated Franks.[1] Pepin, well

[1] Annal. Metten. an. 748. Annal. Nazar. eod. an. Annal. Petav. eod. an. Fred. Chron. Cont. cxvii.

aware of the extremely inflammable materials by which his frontiers were surrounded, and dreading a renewal of the conflagration he had so lately quenched in blood, immediately took the field; marching through Thuringia, he attacked and defeated the Nordosquavi, a Saxon tribe who lived on the river Wipper, between the Bode and Saale. The Saxon leader Theoderic was taken prisoner for the third time, and a considerable number of the captives taken on this occasion were compelled to receive Christian baptism, according to the usual policy of that age.

After fruitless negotiations between the brothers, Gripho endeavoured to make a stand at the river Oker[1]; failing in this, he fled to the Bavarians, among whom an enemy of Pepin was sure to find a welcome. After devastating the Saxon territory for forty days, and reimposing the tribute formerly exacted by Clotaire, Pepin directed his march towards Bavaria, in pursuit of his brother. Odilo, the former duke of this country, was now dead, and had been succeeded by his son Tassilo, who ruled under the influence of the Frankish Princess Hiltrude. These inveterate enemies of Pepin were also joined by a mighty Bavarian chief, called Suitger, and the Suabian duke, Lanfried II. If we understand rightly a passage in the annals of Metz, Gripho succeeded in depriving Tassilo and his mother of the reins of Government and making himself master

[1] In Brunswick.

of Bavaria. Gripho[1], Suitger, and Lanfried united their forces, but not venturing to await the attack of the Franks upon the Lech, as Odilo had done on a former occasion, they retreated at once behind the Inn, which had already proved so effectual a bulwark. Pepin, however, no longer embarrassed by a variety of enemies, determined to bring the matter to a final decision, and was already making preparations to cross the Inn, when the leaders of the allied army, convinced of the futility of braving the superior force of the Franks, voluntarily surrendered themselves prisoners of war. The leniency with which the Bavarians were treated seems to imply that favourable terms of surrender had been granted, at any rate, to them. Tassilo received back his duchy, for which he had to swear fealty to the Frankish ruler; while Alemannia was finally incorporated with the Frankish dominions. The fate of Lanfried II., the last of the Suabian dukes, is not known; but the character and general policy of Pepin are a guarantee that he was not treated with unnecessary harshness. Gripho was once more indebted to his brother for life and liberty, and not only received a full pardon, but was endowed with twelve counties and the town of Mans — a fortune splendid enough to have satisfied the desires of any one who had not dreamed too much of independence and royal authority.[2]

The ill success which attended the efforts of Gripho,

[1] *Annal. Metten.*: "Quem (Tassilonem) de principatu Grippo abegit, et sibi ipse Baioarios subjugavit."

[2] Annal. Metten. an 749. Annal. Einhard. an. 748.

—whose claims but a few years before would have rallied thousands of malcontents round his standard,—and the rapid and easy suppression of the Suabian and Bavarian revolts, afford us evidence that the once bitter opposition of the seigniors, both lay and clerical, to the establishment of the Carlovingian throne, was finally overcome; and that Pepin possessed a degree of settled authority which neither his father nor his grandfather had enjoyed. Many circumstances contributed to this superiority in the position of Pepin, even as compared with his immediate predecessor. He had, in the first place, the great advantage of a quiet and undisputed succession to his father's dignities. His authority could not be regarded merely as that of a great officer of the crown or a successful warrior, but had already acquired an hereditary character, as founded on the mighty deeds of a series of noble ancestors: in the second place, the military constitution of the country had acquired consistency in the long and successful wars of Carl Martel. This constitution, as we shall show, was intimately connected with the *seigniorship*, now fully developed, and the system of *beneficia*, or non-hereditary grants, by which the Frankish rulers endeavoured to secure the services of the powerful chieftains and their dependent followers; and lastly, we must attribute much of the tranquillity enjoyed by Pepin to the vigour with which Carl Martel chastised his unruly subjects, and forced the boldest to succumb to the valour and fortune of his glorious race.

And hence it was that Pepin found both strength

and leisure to regulate by wise laws, the dominions which his father had only been able to overawe by his upraised sword. In this work he was ably seconded by Boniface, whose counsel he sought on all important occasions, and to whom, in turn, he gave material aid in the grand objects of the noble martyr's life — the extension of the Christian faith, and the regulation of the visible Church according to the Roman ritual.

It was during the mayoralty of Pepin, and not, as is generally assumed, in that of Carl Martel, that the famous and important act of "*Secularisation*" took place, which will again be spoken of in the chapter on the Church.[1] The practice into which Carl Martel had been driven by his necessities, of bestowing ecclesiastical benefices on laymen who assumed the priesthood with purely secular views, was inconsistent with the peace and good order, and inimical to all the higher interests, of the Christian Church. As an exceptional state of things, however, even rigid disciplinarians and pious churchmen like Boniface had thought it expedient to yield a tacit assent to the employment of Church revenues for military purposes. But when, on the one hand, the consequences of these irregular and violent expedients had become, with the lapse of time, more clearly evident; and, on the other, a stricter discipline, and a more religious and ecclesiastical spirit had been diffused through the great body of the clergy by the

[1] Roth's Beneficialwesen, p. 336.

labours of Boniface and his school, it became more and more repugnant to the feelings of all true friends of the Church to see its highest offices filled by masquerading laymen, who had nothing of the priest about them but the name and dress. In this repugnance we have every reason to believe that both Carloman and Pepin largely shared; and yet, though not engaged in an internecine struggle like their father, they carried on expensive wars, and needed large supplies of land and money. It was not therefore to be expected that they should ease the Church from all participation in the public burdens, especially at a time when it had absorbed a very large proportion of the national wealth. Under these circumstances, a compromise was effected by the influence of Boniface at the Synod of Lestines.[1] In this important council the assembled bishops consented, in consideration of the urgent necessities of the State, to make a voluntary surrender of a portion of the funds of the Church; with the stipulation that the civil rulers should, on their part, abstain for the future from all arbitrary interference with its discipline and property.

Preparatory to the meeting of the Synod at Lestines, Carloman and Pepin summoned, on the 21st of April, A. D. 742 (at Saltz ?), a council of the great seigniors, temporal and spiritual, to consider how the laws of God and of the Church, which had fallen

[1] Lestines, in the neighbourhood of Cambrai; or, as some writers think, Ettines, near Binche, in Hainault.

into confusion and ruin under former rulers, might be best restored. "For more than eighty years," says Boniface, in his epistle to the Pope on this occasion[1], "the Franks have neither held a synod, nor appointed an archbishop, nor enacted or renewed their canons; but most of the bishoprics are given to rapacious laymen or dissolute and avaricious priests for their own use; and though some of these profess to be chaste, yet they are either drunkards or followers of the chase; or they go armed into battle, and shed with their own hands the blood of Christians as well as heathens!" Before this first assembly, which was a council of state, and not an ecclesiastical synod, Boniface as papal legate brought forward his measures for the reform of the Church and the settlement of its relations to the State. Through the influence of Carloman many of these propositions received the sanction of the council, and they must be regarded as concessions made by the State to the Church. It was enacted that annual synods should be held; that the property of which the churches and monasteries had been violently deprived should be restored; that the counts and bishops in their respective jurisdictions should be directed to put down all heathen practices (to which the people in some parts of the country were still addicted); that the rules of St. Benedict should be re-introduced into the monasteries; and that the clergy should be

[1] Bonifac. Epist. 132. (ed. Würdtwein, ep. 51.) ad Zachar. (an. 742.).

prohibited from war and the chase, from sexual intercourse, and the use of military accoutrements.

In the following year(743), the Synod of Lestines itself was summoned for the final settlement of the points just mentioned; and it was here that the terms on which the consent of Carloman and Pepin to the proposition of Boniface had been given, were made public. "We also enact," runs the decree of these princes, "by the counsel of God's servants, and of the Christian people, that, in consideration of impending wars and the persecutions to which we are subject from surrounding nations, we be allowed, by the indulgence of God, to retain for some time *sub precario et censu* a portion of the Church's property, for the support of our army; on these conditions, that a solidus (gold piece of 12 denarii) should be paid annually to the church or monastery for every estate, and that the church be re-invested with its property at the death of the present holder. Should, however, necessity compel, *or the prince ordain it*, the *precarium* (or life-interest) must be renewed and a new document drawn up; and, in every case, care must be taken that the churches and monasteries, of which the property is *in precario* (granted for a single life), suffer no want or poverty. But if poverty renders it necessary, the whole property must be restored to the church or house of God."[1]

It is not surprising that the remarkable document before us has been quoted, on the one hand, in evi-

[1] Sirmondi, Concil. Gall. (Paris, 1629.), tom. i. p. 540.

dence of the absolute power which the Carlovingian mayors assumed over the Church; and, on the other, of the inviolability of Church property, and the disapprobation with which the conduct of Carl Martel was regarded even by his own sons. Our first impression, on reading this decree, is that the clergy had little reason to rejoice in the results of Boniface's mediation between themselves and the civil power. Not only are the grants of ecclesiastical property, made to laymen for secular and warlike purposes, retained during the lives of the occupants, but express provision is made for the renewal of similar grants, "when necessity compels or the prince commands it." The powers here given of employing the superfluous wealth of the Church for secular purposes could hardly be greater; yet such a relation between Church and State is quite consistent with the circumstances of the times.[1]

Humanly speaking, the Frankish Church, surrounded as it was on either side by the still heathen Germans and the Mohammedan conquerors, owed its preservation to the sword of Carl Martel. Boniface himself emphatically declares that the success of his missionary efforts was to be ascribed in a great measure to the same potent instrument. The influence which the great ecclesiastical dignitaries derived from their sacred calling—the great extent and valuable

[1] Pagi (*Crit. in Annal. Baron.* an. 743, tom. iii.) says on this subject: "Uno verbo Pippinus quidem edictis suis bona Ecclesiasticorum reddi precepit, sed interim eorum laicis hominibus reliquit."

immunities of their lands, and their skill in forming and leading parties in the State—had been greatly lessened by the bold inroads of the same vigorous prince upon their exclusive privileges, and his triumph over the factious nobles. The irresponsible power, too, of the bishops within the Church itself was also curtailed by the successful efforts of Boniface to restore the chain of subordination among the clergy, and to bring the whole body under the absolute supremacy of the Bishop of Rome. The important results of this change are sufficiently evident; for this head of the Western Church was himself an unwilling tributary to the Langobards, and a suppliant to the Frankish mayors for deliverance from triumphant enemies.

We cannot, then, be surprised that the ecclesiastical synods should submit to any terms which promised a settled state of things for the future. And on close examination of the acts of the Synod of Lestines, we shall find that, though much is conceded under the pressure of the moment, the future is carefully provided for. The State acknowledges, in the first place, that certain lands now held by laymen *had* belonged, and did still essentially belong, to the Church; and its claim, though held in abeyance, is effectually kept alive by the payment of a small fixed rent to the original owners; and, secondly, ecclesiastical property is spoken of as *a whole;* a point of very great importance — since the possessions of every religious body, however weak in itself, were thus placed under the protection of the universal Church.

The vast funds which the "Secularisation" placed

at the disposal of the Frankish princes contributed in no small degree to establish the Carlovingian throne; for it enabled them to carry out to its full extent the system of beneficial (or non-hereditary) grants, and to secure the services of the powerful seigniors, who were bound to the Sovereign, not only by a sense of gratitude, but by the hope of future favours and the fear of deprivation.

A change took place at the period at which we have now arrived, which, though easily and noiselessly made, and apparently but nominal, forms an important era in Frankish history. It costs us an effort to remember that Carl Martel, Carloman and Pepin, were not kings, but officers of another, who still bore the royal title, and occasionally and exclusively wore the crown and sat upon the throne. Carloman and Pepin, when they were heading great armies, receiving oaths of allegiance from conquered princes, and giving away duchies, were mayors of the palace to Childeric III., a Merovingian king. Even they had thought the time not yet come for calling themselves by their proper name, and had placed Childeric on the throne. The king's name was a tower of strength, which they who had met and defeated every other enemy seemed to shrink from attacking.

The foundations of the Merovingian throne, indeed, had been thoroughly, perhaps systematically, sapped. The king-making mayors had set up monarchs and deposed them at their pleasure; they had even left the throne vacant for a time, as if to prove whether the nation was yet cured of its inveterate notion that

none but a Merovingian could wear a Frankish crown. This last experiment resulted, as we have said, in the placing of Childeric III. upon the throne; an act by which Carloman and Pepin must have thought that some advantage would be gained, or some danger be avoided. At the commencement of their reign powerful tribes were in rebellion, and semi-dependent princes might think themselves absolved by a change of dynasty from their oaths and engagements, and regard revolt as a duty as well as a pleasure. The Franks themselves had not yet received sufficient proof that the sons were worthy of their sire; and the heathen among them naturally clung to the primeval race.

But circumstances changed. The mayors became more and more the heads of a great semi-feudal system, to the members of which they were the sole source of wealth, authority and honour. The intestine troubles of the kingdom had in great measure been healed; the revolted tribes were reduced to more complete obedience; Pepin himself acquired great military renown, and the limits of the empire were extended to the furthest point which they had ever reached. Pepin was already king indeed; and even towards the adoption of the royal name and style some gradual progress had been made. It had become customary to reckon in dates by the years of the mayor's office as well as the king's reign. The title of *princeps* and *dux* is freely given in the chronicles to Carl Martel and his sons, who regarded the royal palaces as their property, and conferred both

lands and dignities in their own name. There was but one step more to the throne, and that step was taken at last, when there was scarcely a man in the empire who had either the power or the wish to prevent it.[1]

In A. D. 750 Pepin assumed the name of king, with the full consent of the nation and the sanction of the Pope; and the last of the Merovingians was shorn of his royal locks, the emblems of his power, and sent to end his days in the monastery of St. Bertin, at Sithiu[2] (St. Omer in Artois).

The immediate motive for the change is not apparent; and the remarkable absence of all impatience on the part of Pepin to assume the royal name seems to justify the notion that the *coup-de-grâce* was given to the Merovingian dynasty by another hand than his. It might perhaps have been still deferred, but for the growing intimacy of the relations between the Carlovingians and the Pope.

The Bishops of Rome had by no means surmounted the difficulties and dangers by which they had been long surrounded. The Greek emperors, to whom they were nominally subject, were too weak either to afford them the necessary protection against their enemies, or to enforce obedience to themselves; and, in addition to this, the Eastern and Western Churches were continually diverging from each other, both in their theological views and secular objects.

[1] Erchamberti Breviarium (Mon. German. ii. p. 328.).

[2] *Annal. Metten.* an. 750.: "Ex consultu beati Zachariæ." Fredeg. Chron. Cont. cxvii.

The Langobards hung over the eternal city like a cloud which might at any moment send forth the destructive flash. Its only chance of safety for the moment, its only hope of independence and spiritual dominion in the nearer and more distant future, were founded upon a close alliance with the Carlovingian dynasty. It was a cherished object, therefore, with the Popes to bind this illustrious family to themselves by the strongest of ties, — the sense of common interest and mutual indispensability. It was probable that Pepin would one day ascend the Frankish throne, and it was of the highest moment to the Bishops of Rome to assume the initiative in this inevitable dynastic revolution; for thus they would acquire a title to the gratitude of the new king, and give him an interest in the preservation of the source from which his royal title seemed to spring. The part which Boniface took in this transaction is unknown; but his position as the most zealous supporter of the papacy, and the intimate friend and counsellor of Pepin, leads to the conjecture that a change so much in accordance with his known views was not made without his co-operation. All that has been transmitted to us is the fact that, in A. D. 750 (or 751), an embassy, composed of Burchard Bishop of Würzburg, Fulrad Abbot of St. Denys, and Pepin's own chaplain, appeared at Rome at the Papal Court, and laid the following question before Pope Zachary for his decision: "Whether it was expedient that one who was possessed of no authority in the land should continue to retain the name of king, or whether it should be

transferred to him who really exercised the royal power."

It is not to be imagined for a moment that Zachary was unprepared with his reply to this momentous question, which would certainly not have been proposed had there been any doubt respecting the answer. The Pope replied, that "he who really governed should also bear the royal name;" and the embassy returned to Pepin with this message, or, as some writers take a pleasure in calling it, this *command*. A grand council of the nation was assembled at Soissons in the same year, and the major-domus was unanimously elected sole king of the Franks, and soon afterwards anointed and crowned, with his wife Bertrada, by his old and faithful friend Boniface.[1]

This solemn consecration by the use of holy oil, and other ceremonies, observed for the first time at the coronation of the Carlovingian king, were not without their important significance. The sentiment of legitimacy was very strongly seated in the hearts of the Frankish people. The dethroned family had exclusively supplied the nation with their rulers from all time; no one could trace their origin, or point to a Merovingian who was not either a king, or the kinsman of a king. It was far other-

[1] Einhard. Vit. Carol. M. c. i. Gesta Reg. Francor. an. 752. Fredeg. Chron. Cont. cxvii. *Annal. Laurissenses Minor.* an. 753 (Monum. Germ. i.): "Zacharias igitur papa *secundum auctoritatem apostolicam* ad interrogationem eorum respondit, melius atque utilius sibi videri ut ille Rex nominaretur et esset, qui potestatem in regno habebat, quam ille qui falso Rex appellabatur." Annal. Laurissenses et Einhardi, an. 750 (Monum. German. tom. i.).

wise with Pepin. He was the first of his race who had not fought for the office of major-domus with competitors as noble as himself. It was little more than a century since his namesake of Landen had been dismissed from his office by the arbitrary will of Dagobert. The extraordinary fertility of the Carlovingian family in warriors and statesmen had hitherto enabled them to hold their own against all gainsayers. But if the new dynasty was to rest on something more certain and durable than the uninterrupted transmission of great bodily and mental powers in a single family, it was of vital importance to the Carlovingians to rear their throne upon foundations the depth of which was beyond the ken of vulgar eyes. Such a foundation could be nothing else than the sanction of heaven, and was to be sought in the Christian Church, in the fiat of God's representative on earth, who could set apart the Carlovingians as a chosen race, and bestow upon them a heavenly claim to the obedience of their countrymen.

We have already referred to the successful efforts of Boniface and his followers in the cause of Roman supremacy. The belief in the power of the Bishops of Rome, as successors of St. Peter, to bind and to loose, to set up and to set down, had already taken root in the popular mind, and rendered the sanction of the popes as efficacious a legitimiser as the cloud of mystery and fable which enveloped the origin of the fallen Merovingians.

So gradually was this change of dynasty effected, so skilfully was the new throne founded on well-con-

solidated authority, warlike renown, good government, and religious faith, that as far as we can learn from history, not a single voice was raised against the aspiring mayor, when his warriors, *more majorum*, raised him on the shield, and bore him thrice through the joyful throng; and when Boniface anointed him with holy oil, as King of the Franks "by the grace of God," not a single champion was found throughout that mighty empire, to draw his sword in the cause of the last monarch of the house of Clovis.[1]

Pepin was not long allowed to enjoy his new dignity in peace, but was quickly called upon to exchange the amenities of the royal palace for the toils and dangers of the battle-field.

The Saxons had already recovered from, and were desirous of avenging, the chastisement inflicted upon them; and having rebelled "in their way,"[2] were now marching upon the Rhine. But Pepin, who had not ceased to be a general when he became a king, collected a large army, with which he crossed the Rhine, and entering the territory of the Saxons, wasted it with fire and sword, and carried back a large number of captives into his own dominions. "When the Saxons saw this," says the chronicler, "they were moved by penitence; and, with *their usual fear*, begged for the king's mercy, declaring that they

[1] "Pippinus *gratia Dei* Rex Francorum."—*Baluz. Capit. Reg. Francor.* tom. i. p. 185.

[2] Fredeg. Chron. Cont. pars iv. c. cxviii. an. 753. (ap. Bouq. tom. v. p. 1.).

would take an oath of fidelity, and pay more tribute than they had ever paid before, and never revolt again. King Pepin returned, by the aid of Christ, in great triumph to Bonn."

It was on his return from this campaign that he received the news of his brother Gripho's death. This restless and unhappy prince—whom the indelible notion of his right to a throne rendered incapable of enjoying the noble fortune allotted to him by his brother—had fled to Waifar, Duke of Gascony, in the hope of inducing him to take up arms. But Waifar was not in a condition to protect him; and when the ambassadors of Pepin demanded that he should be given up, Gripho was obliged to seek another asylum. The fugitive then directed his course to King Haistulph, foreseeing, probably, that Pepin would be drawn into the feud between the Pope and the Langobards, the subjects of Haistulph, and therefore thinking that he might already regard the latter as the enemy of his brother. As he was passing the Alps, however, with a small retinue, he was set upon, in the valley of St. Jean de Maurienne, by Count Theodo of Vienne and the Trans-juran Count Friedrich. Gripho was slain, but not until after a desperate struggle, in which both the counts above mentioned also lost their lives.[1]

Pepin now retired to his royal residence at Dietenhoven, on the Moselle, and spent the few months of peace that followed the Saxon war in ordering the

[1] Fredeg. Chron. Cont. pars iv., cxviii.

affairs of the Church; which he effected chiefly through the instrumentality of ecclesiastical synods. The influence of these assemblies had very much increased since Boniface first summoned them, and their jurisdiction extended itself beyond the sphere of merely ecclesiastical matters into the wide and undefined field of public morals.

King Pepin was now called upon to repay the obligations conferred upon him by the Papacy when it hallowed his usurpation of the Frankish crown. The influence of Carl Martel with his ally and friend Luitprand, and the reverence which the latter entertained for the Popes in their spiritual character, had caused a temporary lull in the affairs of Italy. But Luitprand died about two years after the accession of Pepin, and was succeeded, first by his grandson Hildebrand, who reigned seven months, and then by Ratchis Duke of Friuli, under whom the Langobards renewed the war against Rome. In this emergency, Zachary, who, like many other popes, trusted greatly and with good reason to his personal influence over the rude kings and warriors of the age, went himself to Perusia to beg a peace from Ratchis. The result was favourable to a degree beyond his highest expectations. The Lombard monarch not only recalled his troops — which were already besieging the towns of the Pentapolis — and granted a peace of forty years, but was so deeply affected by the dignified demeanour and eloquent exhortations of the holy father, that, like another Carloman, he renounced his earthly crown, and sought a refuge from the

cares of government in the quiet cloisters of Monte Casino.[1]

Ratchis was succeeded in A. D. 749 by his brother Haistulph, a man by no means so sensible to spiritual influences, and remarkable for his energy and strength of purpose.[2] In three years from his accession to the Lombard throne, he succeeded in driving out Eutychius, the last exarch of the Greek emperors, from the Exarchate of Ravenna, and made himself master of the city. Having thus secured the possession of the southern portion of the Roman territory, he marched upon Rome itself; and when Pope Zachary died, 15th March, in the year A.D. 752, it must have been with the melancholy conviction that all his efforts to preserve the independence of Rome, and to further the lofty claims of the Papacy, were about to prove fruitless. Once more was Hannibal at the gates; but, fortunately for the interest of the threatened city, the successor of Zachary, Stephen II., was a man in every way equal to the situation. By a well-timed embassy and costly presents, he stayed the uplifted arm of the Lombard for the moment, and, as often happens in human affairs, by gaining time he gained everything.[3]

After remaining quiet for a few months, Haistulph

[1] Vita S. Zachariæ, vit. xciii.

[2] We know nothing of him but what his enemies say of him. According to them he was "Protervus, iniquus, impius, nefarius, malignus, atrocissimus, blasphemus, diabolicus!"

[3] Ex Vit. S. Stephan. II. (ap. Anastas. i. p. 196.). On this mission he sent his brother Paullus Diaconus and Ambrosius the *Primicerius*, who was the chief of the seven Palatine judges. These last were the chief judges and executive of Rome, who

again resumed his threatening attitude towards the Romans, and demanded a palpable proof of their subjection to himself, in the shape of a poll-tax of a gold solidus[1] per head. A fresh embassy from the Pope, which the Lombard king received at Nepe (near Sutri, N. of Rome), met with no success, and the holy Abbots of St. Vincent and St. Benedict, who composed it, returned to their monasteries in despair. Nor was any greater effect produced by the arrival of John, the imperial *Silentiarius*, who was sent by the Greek emperor from Constantinople.[2] This pompous messenger brought letters for the Pope and King Haistulph, in which the latter was called upon to desist from his present undertaking and to restore the whole of the territory of which he had unjustly robbed the Grecian empire. The high-sounding language and haughty requirements of the Byzantians, unsupported as they were by any material power, could make no impression upon such a man as Haistulph, and he dismissed the imperial envoy with an unmeaning answer.

The danger of Rome had now reached its highest point, and no deliverance seemed nigh. "King Haistulph," in the language of the chronicler, "was inflamed with rage, and, like a roaring lion, never ceased to utter the most dreadful threats against the Romans, declaring that he would slay them all with the sword, if they did not submit themselves to his

chose the Pope, and appear to have been prototypes of the seven Electors of the Empire.

[1] About seven shillings and sixpence.

[2] Vit. S. Stephan. II. (Anastas. tom. i.).

rule." An appeal which the Pope had made to the Byzantine emperors for protection was entirely fruitless, and the Romans were utterly unequal to sustain unaided a contest with the warlike Langobards. It was in this extremity that Stephen determined to test once more the value of that close relation which it had been the object of so many popes to form with the Frankish people, and more especially with the Carlovingian family.[1] He knew that it would be no easy matter to induce King Pepin or his Franks to undertake an expedition into Italy with a force sufficient for the object in view. He felt, too, that a mere letter from Pepin, such as Carl Martel had sent to his good friend Luitprand, would be of no avail to turn the ambitious Haistulph from his purpose. He therefore adopted the singular resolution of crossing the Alps, throwing himself at the feet of the Frankish monarch and thus giving him a convincing and affecting proof that the very existence of the Papacy was at stake.

With this view the holy father, seeing that all his entreaties "*for the fold which had been entrusted to him* (Rome), *and the lost sheep*" (Istria and the Exarchate of Ravenna), were fruitless, started from Rome on the 14th of October, A. D. 753[2], in company with the Abbot Rotdigang and Duke Autchar, whom Pepin

[1] Vit. S. Stephan. II.

[2] Ibid.: "Itaque dum isdem sanctissimus vir, jam fatum pestiferum Longobardorum Regem immensis vicibus innumerabilia tribuens munera deprecaretur pro gregibus sibi a Deo commissis et perditis ovibus scilicet pro universo exercitu Ravennæ, atque cuncto istius Italiæ provinciæ populo, quos diabolica fraude ipse impiu deceperat Rex, et possidebat."

had previously sent to Stephen with general promises of support. He was also followed by a considerable number of the Roman clergy and nobility.[1] On his journey northwards he passed through the city of Pavia[2], where Haistulph then was; and though the latter had forbidden him to say a word about restoration of territory, he once more endeavoured, by rich presents and earnest entreaties, to induce the king to give up his conquests and forego his hostile purposes. He was warmly seconded by Pepin's envoys, and another epistle from the Greek emperor; but the mind of the fierce Langobard remained unchanged. It is evident, indeed, that he would have prevented Stephen by force from continuing his journey but for the threats of the Frankish ambassadors. As it was he endeavoured to intimidate the Pope in the presence of Rotdigang into a denial of his wish to proceed to the court of Pepin; and only then dismissed him when he saw that Stephen would yield to nothing but actual violence.

Pepin was still at his palace at Dietenhofen, when the intelligence reached him that the Pope, with a splendid retinue, had passed the Great St. Bernard[3], and was hastening, according to agreement,

[1] *Vit. S. Stephan. II.*: "Christo prævio — *magnam illi cœli serenitatem* Domino in ipso itinere tribuente." Yet a little further on we read: "Papa præ nimio labore itineris *atque temporis inæqualitate* fortiter infirmatus est."

[2] Fred. Chron. Cont. pars iv., cxix. Pope Stephen arrived at Pavia Nov. 15th, A. D. 753.

[3] Fred. Chron. Cont. cxix. "Monte Jovis transmeato" (Great St. Bernard). Vit. S. Stephan. II.

to the monastery of St. Maurice at Agaunum.[1] It had been expected that the king himself would be there to receive the illustrious fugitive; but Stephen on his arrival found in his stead the Abbot Fulrad and Duke Rothard, who received the holy father with every mark of joy and reverence, and conducted him to the palace of Pontyon, near Chalons, where he arrived on the 6th of January, A.D. 754. As a still further mark of veneration, the young prince Carl was sent forward to welcome Stephen at a distance of about seventy miles from Pontyon; and Pepin himself is said to have gone out three miles on foot to meet him, and to have acted as his marshal, walking by the side of his palfrey.[2] The extraordinary honours paid by Pepin to the aged exile proceeded partly, no doubt, from the reverence and sympathy which his character and circumstances called forth. But his conduct might also result from a wise regard to his own interests, and a desire of inspiring his subjects with a mysterious awe for the spiritual potentate at whose behest he had himself assumed the crown.

The decisive conference between Pepin and Stephen took place at Pontyon on the 16th January. The Pope appeared before the Frankish monarch in the garb and posture of a suppliant[3], and received a pro-

[1] In the Swiss Canton of Valais.

[2] "Descendens (Pipinus) de equo suo, cum magna humilitate terræ prostratus, una cum sua conjuge filiis et optimatibus eundem sanctissimum Papam suscepit."—*Vit. S. Stephan. II.*

[3] *Chron. Moissiac.* "*Ortus Pippini*" (Mon. German. tom. i.

mise of protection, and the restoration of all the territority of which the Langobards had deprived him.

The winter, during which no military operations could be undertaken, was spent by Stephen at the monastery of Saint Denis at Paris. The spectacle of the harmony and friendship subsisting between the Roman Pontiff and King Pepin was calculated to produce a good effect on the Romance subjects of the latter; who, on account of his German origin and tendencies, was regarded with less attachment in Neustria and Burgundy than in his Austrasian dominions. This effect was increased by Stephen's celebrating in person that solemn act of consecration which he had already performed by proxy. At the second coronation of Pepin, which took place with great solemnity and pomp in the church of St. Denis on the 28th July, A. D. 754, his Queen, Bertrada, and her two sons Carl and Carloman, were also anointed[1] with the holy oil, and the two last were declared the rightful heirs of their father's empire. That nothing might be

p. 293.): "Sequente die una cum clero suo aspersus cinere, et indutus cilicio in terram prostratus. . . ."

[1] Vit. S. Stephan. II.: "Quinto Kal. Aug. . . . unxit (Stephanus P.) in reges Francorum florentissimum Regem Pippinum et duos filios ejus Carolum et Carolomannum, sed et Bertradam ipsius inclyti Regis P. conjugem, cycladibus regiis gratia septiformis spiritus sancti . . . in Dei nomine consecravit, atque Francorum Proceres Apostolica benedictione sanctificans, auctoritate beati Petri . . . *obligavit et obtestatus est ut nunquam de altera stirpe per succedentium temporum curricula, ipsi vel quique ex eorum progenie orti, Regem super se præsumant aliquo modo constituere.*" Chron. Moissiac. Ortus Pippini.

wanting on the part of the Church to set apart the Carlovingian family as the chosen of God, Stephen laid a solemn obligation on the Franks, that "throughout all future ages neither they nor their prosterity should ever presume to appoint a king over themselves from any other family." The title of *Patricius*, which had first been worn by Clovis, was bestowed by the Pope upon the king and his sons. It is difficult to understand how this dignity could at this period be imparted to any one without the authority of the Byzantine emperor. Constantine (nicknamed Copronymus) may indeed have taken the opportunity of the Pope's journey to offer the patriciate to Pepin; but it is more consistent with the circumstances we have described to suppose that Stephen was acting irregularly and without authority in conferring a Roman title on the Frankish king; and that he intended at the same time to give a palpable proof of his independence of the Emperor who had neglected to aid him, and to point out Pepin as his future ally and protector.

The task which Pepin had undertaken to perform was by no means an easy one, nor did the execution of it depend solely on himself. The empire indeed was enjoying an unwonted freedom from foreign wars and domestic broils; but the great vassals of the crown were averse to distant campaigns, both from the length of time they consumed, and the ruinous expense of maintaining followers far from home.[1]

On the 1st of March, A. D. 755, however, he sum-

[1] Fredeg. Chron. Cont. cxx.

moned his council of state at Bernacum (Braine)[1], where the war against the Langobards was agreed to, provided no other means could be found to reinstate the Pope. In the meantime ambassadors were despatched to Haistulph, with terms which show that the Franks were by no means eager for the expedition.[2] King Pepin on this occasion styles himself "Defender of the holy Roman Church by *Divine appointment*," and demands that the "territories and towns should be restored"—not to the Byzantine emperor, to whom they at any rate nominally belonged, but "to the blessed St. Peter and the Church and commonwealth of the Romans." It is at this crisis of affairs that Carloman, the brother of Pepin, once more appears upon the stage, and in a singular character—viz. as opponent of the Pope. Haistulph, by what influence we are not informed, prevailed upon him to make a journey to the Frankish court, for the purpose of counteracting the effect of Stephen's representations. He met of course with no success, and was sent by

[1] Between Soissons and Cambrai.

[2] *Vita S. Steph. II.*: "Plena ei pollicitus est munera." *Annal. Mett.*: "XII millia solidorum." *Chron. Moissiac.*: "Ut Sanctam Rom. Eccles. cujus ille defensor per ordinationem divinam fuerat non affligeret, sed omnem justitiam de rebus ablatis faceret. . . . . Haistulfus autem requisivit quæ illa justitia esset; cui legati responderunt, ut ei reddas Pentapolim, Narnias et Cecanum . . . . et hoc tibi mandat Pippinus, quod si justitiam sancto Petro reddere vis dabit tibi XII millia solidorum." *Codex Carol.* Ep. 7.: . . . *reddere civitates et loca B. Petro sanctæque Dei ecclesiæ — et Reipublicæ Romanorum.*"

Pepin and Stephen into a monastery at Vienne, where he died in the same year.[1]

Haistulph on his part was equally determined, and war became inevitable. He would make no promise concerning the conquered territory, but would grant a safe conduct to Stephen back to his own diocese. The lateness of the season allowed of no lengthened negotiations. Immediately after the receipt of Haistulph's answer Pepin began his march towards Italy, accompanied by Stephen; and having sent forward a detachment to occupy the passes of the Alps, he followed it with the whole force of the empire. Passing through Lyons and Vienne, he made his way to Maurienne, with the intention of crossing the Alps by the valley of Susa, at the foot of Mont Cenis. This important pass, however, had been occupied by Haistulph, who had pitched his camp there and was prepared to dispute the passage. According to the chroniclers, he endeavoured to strengthen his position by the same warlike machines which he had "wickedly designed for the destruction of the Roman state and the Apostolic Chair."[2] The onward march of the Franks was effectually checked for the moment, and Pepin pitched his camp on the river Arç. In a short time, however, a few of the more adventurous of his soldiers made their way through the mountains into the valley of Susa, where Haistulph lay. Their inferior numbers emboldened the Langobards, who immediately attacked them. "The Franks," says the chronicler, "seeing that their own strength and

[1] Vita S. Stephan. II. [2] Ibid.

resources could not save them, invoked the aid of God and the holy Apostle Peter; whereupon the engagement began, and both sides fought bravely. But when King Haistulph beheld the loss which his men were suffering, he betook himself to flight, after having lost nearly the whole of his army, with the dukes, counts and chief men of the Langobards."[1] The main body of Pepin's army then passed the Alps without resistance, and spread themselves over the plains of Italy as far as Pavia, in which the Lombard king had taken refuge. The terrible ravages of the invaders, who plundered and burnt all the towns and villages which lay along their route, and the imminent danger which threatened himself and his royal city, subdued for the moment the stubborn spirit of Haistulph, and he earnestly besought the Frankish prelates and nobles to intercede for him with their "merciful" sovereign. He promised to restore Ravenna and all the other towns which he had taken "*from the holy see*," to keep faithfully to his allegiance to Pepin, and never again to inflict any injury on the Apostolic Chair or the Roman state. The Pope himself, who had no desire to see the Franks too powerful in Italy, earnestly begged his mighty protector "to shed no more *Christian* blood, but to put an end to the strife by peaceful means."[2] Pepin was by no means sorry to be spared the siege of Pavia, and having received forty hostages and caused Haistulph

[1] Fredeg. Chron. Cont. pars iv. c. cxx.
[2] Vit. S. Steph. II.

to ratify his promises by the most solemn oaths, he sent the Pope with a splendid retinue to Rome, and led his army homewards laden with booty.

But Haistulph was not the man to sit down quietly under a defeat, or to forego a long cherished purpose. In the following year he renewed the attack upon the Roman territory with a fury heightened by the desire of vengeance.[1] Rome itself was besieged, and the church of St. Peter on the Vatican sacrilegiously defiled. Pope Stephen II., from whose life and letters we gain our knowledge of these circumstances, repeatedly wrote to Pepin and his sons for aid, in the most urgent, and at times indignant terms. In one of his epistles, St. Peter himself is made to address them as "his adopted sons," and to chide the delay and indecision of the king. After assuring them that not he (the Apostle) only, but "the Mother of God, the ever-Virgin Mary," and "thrones and dominions, and the whole army of Heaven, and the martyrs and confessors of Christ, and all who are pleasing to God," earnestly sought and conjured them to save the holy see, the Apostle promises, in case of their compliance, that he will prepare for them "the highest and most glorious tabernacles" and bestow on them "the rewards of eternal recompense and the infinite joys of paradise." "But if," he adds, "which we do not expect, you should make any delay, ... know that, for your neglect of my exhortation, you are alienated from the kingdom of God and from eternal life." When speaking in his own person Stephen says, "Know that

[1] Fred. Chron. Cont. pars iv. c. cxxi. Vit. S. Steph. II. c. 41.

the Apostle Peter holds firmly in his hand the deed of gift which was granted by your hands." Nor does he neglect to remind the Frankish princes of their obligation to the Papacy and the return that they were expected to make. "*Therefore*," he says, "has the Lord, at the intercession of the Apostle Peter and by means of our lowliness, consecrated you as kings, that through you the holy Church might be exalted and the prince of the Apostles regain his lawful possessions."[1]

The boundless promises and awful denunciations of the Pope might have been alike unavailing, had not other and stronger motives inclined the king to make a second expedition into Italy. The interests of his dynasty were so closely connected with those of the Roman Church, that he could not desert the Pope in this imminent peril without weakening the foundations of his throne; and his honour as a warrior and a king seemed to require that the Lombards should be punished for their breach of faith. The influence of Boniface, too (who was still alive, though he died before the end of the campaign), was no doubt exerted in behalf of the Papacy which he had done so much to raise. Pepin determined to save the Pope, but he did so at the imminent risk of causing a revolt

[1] *Codex Carol.* No. III.: ". . . ideoque ego Petrus Apostolus —qui vos adoptivos habeo filios. . . . Sed et Domina nostra, Dei Genitrix, semper Virgo Maria, nobiscum vos magnis obligationibus adjurans protestatur, &c. . . . . sciatis vos ex auctoritate sanctæ et unicæ Trinitatis per gratiam apostolatus, quæ data est mihi a Christo Domino, *vos alienari pro transgressione nostræ ad hortationis a regno Dei et vita aterna.*"

among his own vassals, who openly and loudly expressed their disapproval of the war. "This war" (against the Langobards), says Einhard[1], "was undertaken with the greatest difficulty, for some of the chief men of the Franks with whom he (Pepin) was accustomed to take counsel were so strongly opposed to his wishes that they openly declared that they would desert the king and return home." Pepin found means to pacify or overawe these turbulent dissentients, and persisted in his determination once more to save the head of the Church from the hands of his enemies. In this second expedition Pepin was accompanied by his nephew Tassilo, who, in obedience to the war-ban of his liege lord, joined him with the Bavarian troops.[2] The Frankish army marched through Châlons and Geneva to the same valley of Maurienne and to the passes of Mont Cenis, which, as in the former year, were occupied by the troops of Haistulph. The Franks, however, in spite of all resistance, made their way into Italy, and took a fearful vengeance for the broken treaty, destroying and burning everything within their reach, and giving no quarter to their perfidious enemies. They then closely invested Pavia; and Haistulph, convinced

[1] *Einhardi, Vit. Carol. M.*: "Quod (bellum contra Langobardos) prius quidem et a patre ejus, Stephano Papa supplicante, cum magna difficultate susceptum est, quia quidam e primoribus Francorum cum quibus consultare solebat, adeo voluntate ejus renisi sunt, ut se regem deserturos domumque redituros libera voce proclamarent."

[2] Fredeg. Chron. Cont. pars iv. c. cxxi. an. 755. Annal. Laurissens. et Einhardi, an. 756. (Monum. Germ. i.) Vita P. Stephan. II.

of his utter inability to cope with Pepin, again employed the willing services of the Frankish seigniors to negotiate a peace. Pepin on his side accepted the overtures made to him with singular facility, but obliged Haistulph to give fresh hostages, to renew his oaths, and, what was more to the purpose, to deliver up a third of the royal treasure in the city of Pavia. Haistulph also agreed to renew an annual tribute, which is said to have been paid for a long time previously to the Frankish monarchs.

And thus a second time was the Papacy delivered from a danger which went nigh to nip its budding greatness, and reduce it to the rank of a Lombard bishopric.

Haistulph died while hunting in a forest, before he had had time to forget the rough lessons he had received and to recover from his losses in blood and treasure. The fact that his life was preserved while he was besieging Rome and desecrating St. Peter's church, and the consideration that good men too are sometimes killed while hunting, did not prevent the chroniclers from giving an unanimous verdict of "struck by Divine vengeance."[1] We know but little of him beyond this, that he was an ambitious man with a strong will, and not *more* scrupulous in keeping oaths than the other princes of his age. Unfortunately we cannot use the letters of the Roman pontiffs as sources for the biography of their opponents, on ac-

[1] Fred. Chron. Cont. pars iv. c. cxxii. Dec. 756. Vita P. Stephan. II. *Annal. Mett.* an. 756.: "Divina ultione percussus."

count of the exceeding vigour of their style. "*The tyrant Haistulph*," *says Stephen II.*, "*the child of the devil, who thirsted for the blood of Christians and destroyed churches, has been struck by the hand of God, and thrust into the abyss of hell in the same days in which a year before he had marched out to destroy Rome*,"[1] *&c. &c.*

A danger from another quarter, which threatened the development of the papal power, was also warded off by the power and steadfastness of Pepin. When the Exarchate of Ravenna was overrun by the Langobards, it was taken, not from the Pope, but from the Greek Emperor; and even the towns and territories which were virtually under the sway of the papal chair, were, nominally at least, portions of the Eastern Roman Empire. As Stephen had never formally renounced his allegiance to the Emperor, he could receive even the Roman duchy only as a representative of his sovereign, and to the other remains of the Roman Empire in Italy he had no claim whatever. The Langobards had dispossessed the Greeks, and the Franks had expelled the Langobards. It was therefore open to the conqueror to bestow his new acquisition where he pleased; but, at all events, the claim of the Greek Emperor was stronger than that of his vassal the Bishop of Rome. We cannot wonder, then, when we read, that ambassadors[2] from Constantinople came to meet Pepin in the neighbour-

1 Cod. Carol. No. VIII.

2 The Protoasecreta Georgius and the Silentiarius Johannes.

hood of Pavia, and begged him to restore Ravenna and the other towns of the exarchate to the Roman Emperor. "But they did not succeed," says the chronicler, "in moving the steadfast heart of the king; on the contrary, he declared that he would by no means allow these towns to be alienated from the rule of the Roman chair, and that nothing should turn him from his resolution."[1] Accordingly, he despatched the Abbot Fulrad, with the plenipotentiary of King Haistulph, to receive possession of the towns and strong places which the Lombard had agreed to resign.[2] The abbot was further instructed to take with him a deputation of the most respectable inhabitants from these towns, and in their company to carry the keys of their gates to Rome, and lay them in St. Peter's grave, together with a regular deed of gift to the Pope and his successors.

The independence of the holy see, as far as regarded the Greek Empire, was thus secured, and a solid foundation laid for the temporal power of the Popes, who may now be said to have taken their place for the first time among the sovereigns of Europe.

The rising fortunes of the Roman pontiffs were still further favoured by a disputed succession to the Lombard throne. On the death of Haistulph, his

[1] Vita Stephan. II. Cod. Carol. No. VIII.

[2] These were Ravenna, Ariminum (Rimini), Pisaurum (Pesaro), Conca, Fanum, Cesina, Senogallia (Sinigaglia), Æsio (Jesi), Forum Populi, Forum Livii (Forli), Sassubium, Mons Feltri, Acerres, Agiomons, Mons Lucati, Serra, the Castle of S. Marini, Bobium, Urbinum, Callis, Luciolis, Eugubium (Gubbio), and Comiaclum. Vit. Steph. II.

brother Ratchis, who had formerly changed a crown for a cowl, was desirous of returning to his previous dignity, and appears to have been the popular candidate. Desiderius[1], Duke of Tuscia, Constable of Haistulph, obtained the support of the Pope. In order to secure this valuable alliance, he had promised "to comply with all the holy father's wishes," to deliver up other towns in Italy besides those mentioned in Pepin's deed of gift, and to make him many other rich presents. "Upon this," says the chronicle, "the Arch-shepherd took counsel with the venerable Abbot Fulrad, and sent his brothers, Diaconus Paulus and Primicerius Christopher, in company with Abbot Fulrad, to Desiderius, in Tuscia, who immediately confirmed his former promises with a deed and a most fearful oath."[2]

After this prudent precaution, it was agreed at Rome that the cause of Desiderius should be supported, even by force of arms if necessary, against Ratchis. "But Almighty God ordered matters in such a manner that Desiderius, with the aid of the Pope, ascended the throne without any further contest. The promised towns, Faventia (Faenza), with the fortresses Tiberiacum, Cavellum, and the whole duchy of Ferrara, were claimed, and, according to some accounts, received, by the papal envoys; though

[1] "Desiderius vir mitissimus."—*Cod. Carol.* No. VIII.

[2] Vit. Steph. II. Fred. Chron. Cont. pars iv. c. cxxii. The promises of Desiderius were indeed magnificent. Vit. Cod. Carol. No. VIII. Annal. Mett. an. 758.

the next Pope complains that Desiderius had not kept his promises.[1] Stephen II. ended his eventful life on the 24th of April, A.D. 757.

With the exception of an unimportant expedition against the Saxons, in which Pepin gained a victory on the river Lippe, and again at Sithiu, near Dülmen on the Stever (in Westphalia), nothing of importance, in a military point of view, appears to have been undertaken before A.D. 760; when, according to some authors, Narbonne was taken from the Saracens, who were now driven from all their possessions on the Gallic side of the Pyrenees.[2]

In A.D. 760, began a long series of annual expeditions against Aquitaine, a country which had asserted a degree of independence highly offensive to the Franks. The Aquitanian princes, too, are supposed to have been peculiarly odious to Pepin, as offshoots from the Merovingian stock.[3] Waifar, the reigning duke, the son of that Hunold who had retired from the world in disgust after his defeat by

[1] Epist. Paulli ad Pippin. Cod. Carol. No. XV.

[2] Annal. Mett. an. 752, represent Pepin as marching against Narbonne in 752, and leaving a force before that town, by which it was taken after a three years' siege, i.e. in 755, when he was himself engaged in Italy, in the war with the Langobards.

[3] Clotaire II., son of Chilperic and Fredegunda.

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Charibert II.

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Boggis.

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Eudes.

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Hunold.

the Franks, inherited the restless and haughty spirit of his father, and was ready to renew the contest which Hunold had abandoned in despair. The ambitious desires of Pepin, quickened by a personal dislike of Waifar, were seconded by a strong mutual antipathy existing between his own subjects and the Aquitanians. German blood did not enter largely into the composition of the population of Aquitaine, and that small portion which did flow in their veins was supplied by the Ostrogoths, a German tribe, indeed, but one which differed very widely from their Frankish kinsmen. The Aquitanians appear at this time to have possessed a degree of civilisation unknown to the Franks, whom they regarded as semi-barbarians; while the Franks, in turn, despised the delicacy and refinement of their weaker neighbours. Their mutual dislikes and jealousies were kept alive by a perpetual border warfare, which was carried on (as formerly between England and her neighbours on the north and west) by powerful individuals in either country, without regard to the relations existing between their respective rulers. It was from these causes that Pepin came to look upon the Aquitanians and their duke in the same light as the Welsh were regarded by our own Edward I. The affected independence of Waifar, and the continual inroads made by the Aquitanians into his dominions, exasperated his feelings in the highest degree; and he evidently sought the quarrel which occupied him for the remainder of his life.

In A.D. 760, Pepin sent an embassy to Waifar, with

demands which betrayed his hostile intentions against that unfortunate prince. On this occasion, too, the Frankish monarch came forward as a protector of the Church. He demanded of Waifar that he should give up all the ecclesiastical property in his dominions which had been in any way alienated from the Church; restore the immunities which the lands of the clergy had formerly enjoyed; and cease for the future from sending into them his officers and tax-gatherers. Furthermore, he demanded that Waifar should pay a *weregeld* "for all the Goths whom he had lately put to death contrary to law;" and, lastly, that he should deliver up all fugitives from the dominions of Pepin who had sought refuge in Aquitaine.[1]

Waifar had thus the option given him of submitting to become a mere lieutenant of Pepin, or of having the whole force of the Frankish empire employed for his destruction. He chose the latter alternative, as every high-spirited prince must have done under the circumstances; and the war began at once. "All this," says the chronicler, "Waifar refused to do; and therefore Pepin collected an army from all quarters, although *unwillingly, and, as it were, under compulsion.*"[2] The Frankish army marched through Troyes and Auxerre, and, crossing the Loire at the village of Masua[3], and passing through Berri and Auvergne, devastated the greater part of Aqui-

[1] Annal. Einhard. an. 760. Annal. Lauriss. an. 760. Fred. Chron. Cont. pars iv. c. cxxiv.

[2] Ibid.: "Invitus et coartatus."

[3] Mesves, in the Department Nievre.

taine with fire and sword. Waifar, who was not sufficiently prepared for the attack, made an insincere profession of penitence which deceived no one; and, after taking the necessary oaths of fidelity and giving hostages, was relieved from his unwelcome visitors. That this was a mere marauding expedition, to which Waifar offered no serious resistance, is proved by the fact that "Pepin returned back without having suffered the *slightest* loss."[1]

In the following year Waifar, who had formed an alliance with Hunibert, Count of Bourges, and Blandin, Count of Auvergne, considered himself strong enough to venture upon an inroad into the Frankish territory; and, in company with these allies, he led his army, plundering and burning, as far as Châlons on the Saône. Pepin's rage at hearing that the Aquitanians had dared to take the initiative, and had ravaged a large portion of Neustria, and even burned his own palace at Melciacum, was further increased by the knowledge that some of his own counts were aiding the invaders. Hastily collecting his troops, he took a terrible revenge, and showed the unusual exasperation of his feelings by putting his prisoners to death, and allowing a great number of men, women, and children to perish in the flames of the conquered towns. As Waifar still continued contumacious, a similar expedition was undertaken by the Franks in the following year, and Bourges and Thouars were stormed and taken. Pepin, ac-

[1] Fred. Chron. pars iv. c. 125.

cording to the chronicles, invariably returned from these campaigns victorious "by the aid of God," or "under the guidance of Christ," "laden with booty, and without the slightest loss."

At the return of spring, in A. D. 763, Pepin held the *Campus Maius* at Nevers[1], at which it was resolved once more to carry fire and sword into the devoted land of Aquitaine, the inhabitants of which had already lost almost everything but their stubborn hatred of their Frankish oppressors. It is curious, when we consider that this war was undertaken by Pepin on behalf of the Church (which Waifar was accused of despoiling), to read the account of the destructive march of the Franks. "After desolating nearly the whole of the country about Limoges," says the chronicler, "and *plundering many monasteries*, he marched to Issandon (near Limoges), and laid waste a great part of Aquitaine, which was chiefly covered with vineyards; for, in nearly the whole of Aquitania, the *churches and monasteries*, the rich and the poor, cultivated the vine, but *he destroyed everything*."[2]

The campaign of this year is remarkable for the sudden defection of Tassilo, Duke of Bavaria and nephew of Pepin, who, during the march towards Aquitaine, suddenly withdrew with his troops under

[1] In the Dep. Nievre. According to the Annal. Petav., the Campus Maius (or *May* Field) was introduced A.D. 755. Annal. Mett. an. 762 et 763.

[2] Fred. Chron. Cont. pars iv. c. CXXX. There is a difference of two or three years in the chronology of Fredegar and that of the Annal. Lauriss. et Einhardi. Annal. Lariss. et Einhardi, an. 763, where these events are placed A.D. 763.

pretence of illness, with the firm resolve "never to see his uncle's face again." When about twenty-one years of age, Tassilo had been compelled to swear fealty to Pepin at the Campus Maius held at Compiegne in A. D. 757. Since that period he had been kept continually near his uncle's person, as if the latter was not satisfied with the sincerity of his subservience. The defection of Tassilo, at a time when the Frankish power was engaged in this desperate and bitter contest with the Aquitanians, caused great anxiety to Pepin; and though the march was continued as far as Cahors (Dep. Lot.), little of importance was effected.

The diet was held in the following year, A. D. 764, at Worms, where it was discussed whether the war should be proceeded with or the revolt of the Bavarians be first suppressed. It would appear, however, that Pepin found it impossible to induce his vassals to march in either direction, for we are told that he passed the whole year at home, and spent the winter at his palace at Chiersy.[1] He endeavoured, indeed, to plant a thorn in the side of Waifar by bestowing the lately conquered town of Argenton and the province of Berri on Remistan, the uncle of Waifar, who had voluntarily sworn allegiance to him. But this hope, too, failed; for Remistan was false to his own treachery, and soon reconciled himself to his nephew, and took up the national cause. To show his sincerity in this second

[1] According to the Annal. Lauriss. et Einhardi, A.D. 764.

change, Remistan devastated the territory of Bourges and Limoges in so terrible a manner that "not a farmer dared to till his fields or vineyards."[1]

The effect of the perpetual and harassing inroads of the Aquitanians upon the Franks was such as Pepin most desired. It exasperated them to such a degree that they were ready to make any sacrifice to destroy their troublesome enemy. In the campus Maius, therefore, which Pepin held at Orleans in A. D. 766, he found his vassals fully prepared to second his designs, and determined, at any cost, to finish the war. Considerable progress was made towards the subjugation of Waifar's territory during this year, but still more in the two following; in the former of which the city of Toulouse[2] and the fortresses Scoraille, Turenne, and Peiruce were taken, and in the latter the Frankish army pressed on as far as the Garonne, Perigueux, and Saintes.

Waifar and his people were by this time utterly exhausted by their exertions and calamities, and, being without the means of continuing the war, lay at the mercy of the conquerors. Embittered by the opposition he had met with, Pepin acted with unusual harshness. Taking his family with him to Saintes, and leaving them there, "he turned his whole mind to the destruction of Waifar, and determined never

[1] Fred. Chron. Cont. pars iv. c. cxxxiii.

[2] Annal. Lauriss. et Einhard. an. 767.; Conf. Ann. Einh. ad an. eund. .In this same year he also held a synod at Salmoncy (near Laon), de Sancta Trinitate vel de Sanctorum imaginibus inter orientalem et occidentalem Eccles., id est, Romanos et Græcos. . . ."

to rest till he had captured or killed the rebel."[1] Remistan was soon afterwards taken prisoner and *hung* as a traitor.[2] The mother, sister, and niece of Waifar fell into the hands of the Franks, and were sent off into the interior of the kingdom.[3] That unhappy prince himself, deprived of every hope, and every consolation in disaster, deserted by the great mass of the Gascons, and hunted from hiding-place to hiding-place like a wild beast, met with the common fate of unfortunate monarchs; he was betrayed and murdered by his own followers in the forest of Edobold in Perigord.[4] The independence of Aquitaine fell with him, and the country was subsequently governed by Frankish counts like the rest of Pepin's empire.

The victor returned in triumph to his queen Bertrada (who was awaiting him at Saintes), rejoicing, doubtless, in having at last attained the object of so many toilsome years. His implacable and hated foe was no more; the stiff-necked Aquitanians were at his feet; his southern border was secure; and the whole empire was in an unwonted state of peace. He had every reason to look forward with confidence

[1] Annal. Einhardi, an. 768.

[2] *Fred. Chron. Cont.* pars iv. c. cxxxiv.: "In patibulo suspendi jussit." Conf. *Tacit. Germ.* xii.: "Proditores et transfugas arboribus suspendunt."

[3] "Quas cum pie susceptas servari jussisset."—*Einhard. Annal.* an. 768.

[4] "Dolo warratonis."—*Annal. Lauriss. Min.* an. 768. *Fred. Chron. Cont.* pars iv. c. cxxxv.: "Dum hæc agerentur, ut asserunt, consilio Regis factum, Waifarius Princeps Aquitaniæ a suis interfectus est."

to an interval at least of quiet, which he might spend in domestic pleasures and in the regulation of the internal affairs of the vast empire over which he ruled.

But where he had looked for repose and safety an enemy awaited him more terrible than any whom he had encountered in the field. A short time after he arrived at Saintes, he was attacked by a disease which is variously described as fever and dropsy. Convinced that his case was beyond all human aid, he set out with his wife and children to Tours, and, entering the church of St. Martin, earnestly prayed for the intercession of that patron saint of the Frankish kings. From thence he proceeded to Paris, and passed some time in the monastery of St. Denis, invoking the aid of God through his chosen servants. But when he saw that it was the will of heaven that he should die, he provided for the future welfare of his subjects; summoning the dukes and counts, the bishops and clergy of his Frankish dominions, he divided the whole empire, with their concurrence, between his two sons, Carl and Carloman. He died a few days after the settlement of the succession, on the 24th of September, A. D. 768, in the twenty-fifth year of his prosperous reign, and was buried by his sons, with great pomp, in the church of St. Denis, at Paris.[1]

Pepin was described by Alcuin, in the following generation, as an "energetic and honourable" prince, "distinguished alike by his victories and his vir-

[1] Fred. Chron. Cont. pars iv. c. cxxxvi. Annal. Mett. an. 768.

tues;" and although such epithets were used, more especially in that age, without sufficient discrimination, there is every reason in the present case to adopt them in their full significance. In the field, indeed, he had fewer difficulties to deal with than his warlike father. In all his military undertakings the odds were greatly in his favour; and he had not the same opportunities as Carl Martel of showing what he could effect by the mere force of superior genius. Yet, whatever he was called upon to do, he did with energy and success. He quickly brought the revolted German nations, the Bavarians and Suabians, to the obedience to which the *hammering* of his predecessor had reduced them; and he drove back the restless Saxons to their wild retreats. Twice he led an army across the Alps against a brave and active enemy, and twice returned victorious, after saving the distant city of Rome from imminent destruction and securing the independence of the Pope.

As a civil ruler he showed himself temperate and wise. Though greatly superior in every respect to his brother, he took no unfair advantage of him, but lived and acted with him in uninterrupted harmony. Though his ambition induced him to assume the name of king, he did so without haste or rashness, at a time and under circumstances in which the change of dynasty was likely to cause the least amount of ill-feeling or disturbance.

In his relations to the Church he displayed both reverence and self-respect. From conviction as well

as policy, he was a staunch supporter of Christianity and the Roman Church: but he was no weak fanatic; he cherished and advanced the clergy, and availed himself of their superior learning in the conduct of his affairs; but he was by no means inclined to give way to immoderate pretensions on their part. He always remained their master, though a kind and considerate one; nor did he scruple to make use of their over-flowing coffers for the general purposes of the State.

Of his private life we know scarcely anything at all; but we have no reason to suppose that it was inconsistent with that respect for religion, that love of order, justice, and moderation which he generally manifested in his public acts. In his last campaigns against Waifar and the Aquitanians alone does he seem to have been betrayed into a cruel and vindictive line of conduct; and from them, as we have seen, he received the greatest provocation.

With such high qualities, important transactions, and glorious deeds, connected with his name, we might wonder that the fame of Pepin is not greater, did we not know the diminishing force of unfavourable contrast. Unfortunately, for his renown at least, he had a father and a son still greater than himself. Such a man would have risen like an alp from the level plain of ordinary kings: as it is, he forms but a link in a long chain of eminences, of which he is not the highest; and thus it has come to pass that the tomb of one who ruled a mighty empire for twenty-five

years with invariable success, who founded a new dynasty of kings, and established the Popes on their earthly throne, is inscribed with the name of his still more glorious successor; and all his high qualities and glorious deeds appear to be forgotten in the fact that he was "*Pater Caroli Magni!*"

CHAP. VII.

POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS, LAWS, CUSTOMS, ETC.

THE political institutions, laws, and customs carried by the Franks into Gaul, which, in a form developed by time and modified by foreign influence, were subsequently established by Charlemagne throughout the greater part of Europe, are the groundwork of modern civilisation. They possess, therefore, the strongest claims to the interest of all who would study the Carlovingian period of Frankish history, or trace to their origin the various, and often incongruous, phenomena of European life.

But the investigation of this subject is rendered difficult and disappointing by the fragmentary nature of the accounts which have come down to us respecting the political state of Europe in the sixth and seventh centuries. And if the poverty of the sources of our knowledge were all we had to regret,—if they were but clearer, less adulterated with fable, more in harmony with each other,—our task would be less arduous than it is. Yet the deficiency of materials for a constitutional history of this period is not accidental—not the consequence of Alexandrian fires or monkish

want of taste or parchment, but of the circumstances of the times themselves. The different substances of which society is composed lie before us now in distinct and regular strata; *then* they were in a state of fusion. And who, when looking into that boiling mass, could undertake to describe each evanescent bubble, as it rose to the troubled surface, or prophesy what enduring shapes would one day issue from it?

The literary monuments from which we derive our limited knowledge of the middle ages are indeed confused, but not more so than the then existing state of things. They are inconsistent and irreconcilable beyond all parallel, but so were the phenomena themselves. The Gallo-Roman and the German differed so widely from each other in their national characteristics, as to render their union difficult under any circumstances; but their original disparity was greatly increased by the different degrees of civilisation to which they had attained when they first came into collision with each other, and by the opposing nature of their religion, laws, and civil polity. In that strange period, forms of government fresh from the forests of Germany were seen side by side with the latest rescripts of imperial tyranny; and laws "dictated by necessity and written down by freedom" with the subtlest refinements of the Roman jurists. The votaries of the rude and cruel superstitions of the Northern Mythology became daily witnesses of the rites and ceremonies of the Christian Church. Fearless independence and rude poverty were brought into the closest contact with mean ser-

vility and enervating luxury. On the one side was ignorance, on the other learning: here bodily strength and martial prowess; there mental subtlety and vigour: here rudeness of manners, bordering on brutality; and there refinement, carried to an effeminate excess. No wonder, then, that the succeeding age was one in which history was silent, or gave but an uncertain sound,—that men of the clearest intellect should be able to see but little in that chaotic darkness,—that after many a long and anxious gaze they should so widely differ from one another, in their reports of what they see. "Such, in fact," says M. Guizot, "is the character of the barbarian epoch; it is the chaos of all elements, the infancy of all systems, a universal pell-mell, in which even the struggle itself is neither permanent nor systematic." And again: "After examining in all its phases the social state of this period, I could show you that it is impossible to discover anywhere a principle at all general, or at all established."

Nor does the difficulty which history finds in making her way through this intricate region arise solely from the confusion caused by the mingling of dissimilar races under very peculiar circumstances. Much of this disorder would have arisen had the Franks found Gaul altogether uninhabited; for they were not at one among themselves. The government and religion of the ancient Germans were very local in their character, not easily transplanted to another region. The exercise of their political rights and the performance of their religious ceremonies

were bound up with certain family and communal arrangements, and associated with certain holy places, and when these were disorganised or left behind, it was not an easy matter to reconstruct them under novel circumstances and on foreign ground. During their long wanderings in search of their promised land, the citizen became a soldier, the people an army; and they were subjected for an unusually long period to a control of a much stricter kind than any in which they would have acquiesced at home. And when at length they ceased to move, and settled down in the lands which their swords had won, the more arbitrary authority which had grown up during the period of transition was too firmly established to be immediately shaken off. Yet those who, for a definite object, submitted themselves to military rule, could not forget their rights, or easily consent to be permanently degraded in the social scale. And hence arose fresh struggles between existing powers and ancient traditions, between claims of authority which were not allowed, and inalienable rights which could not be exercised.

The difficulty of this transition from a fluid to a solid state, from the habits and arrangements of soldiers and wanderers, to the manners and laws of a settled community, were greatly increased by the most striking national characteristics of the Teuton. He is by no means social or plastic in his nature; he is a stubborn, angular, and impracticable unit, which loves to develope itself on all sides in its own way, and hates above all things to be fitted into a system,

or to become part of a machine. This peculiarity would display itself most strongly in such a scene as we have endeavoured to describe; where the state, which is generally strong enough to coerce the most unruly individual, was disorganised and weak. Having no longer before him the beaten road which his ancestors had trodden for ages, every man "followed after that which was good in his own eyes," crossing his neighbour's path, thwarting his neighbour's plans, with all the ineradicable idiosyncrasy of his race.

The influence of this strong leaven in the Teutonic nature is still observable, and particularly so in the nation whose German blood is least "contaminated" by foreign admixture[1], and in the land where German institutions have had the best opportunities of fully developing themselves. We mean of course England and the English. Where are there found so many incongruous materials in one structure as go to form the English constitution? Where greater inconsistency and confusion than in the English law? Where greater irregularity of action than in English legislation and English justice?

The individual is not absorbed into the mass in the same degree among us as in other nations. Nowhere

[1] *Tac. Germ.*, c. iv.: ". . . nullis aliis aliarum nationum connubiis infectos. . . ." The Anglo-Saxons *drove out* the Britons; and both Danes and Normans were Germans. Conf. Roth, Beneficialwesen, p. 33.: "It was not its insular position, but the exclusion of all Celtic and Romance elements which kept England, comparatively speaking, free and happy."

else do you hear so much of vested rights, or so often see a single arm thrust into the great wheel of state, whether to check its beneficial progress or to stay the perilous rapidity of its course. It is difficult enough to induce Englishmen to combine, even for the attainment of really great and worthy objects; but happily still more so to unite them in the pursuit of the phantoms of the political empiric's phrenzied brain. Our course is circuitous, and our motions irregular and slow, but they are nearly always in the right direction.

It is this Teutonic peculiarity which makes our institutions so clumsy, but so massive and impregnable. It is this which makes our people at the same time the most liberal and the most conservative, the freest and the most loyal in the world, the greatest lovers of what is old, and the first to reap the real advantage of what is good in the new.

The object we propose to ourselves, of gaining as correct a view as is practicable of the institutions of the Franks in Gaul, will be best promoted by first considering the principles and forms of government which prevailed among them previous to their migrations. And here if we could adopt the opinion of M. Lehuërou, that our German forefathers were mere bands of marauders, with robber chieftains at their head; or that of M. Guizot, who says, that they had no public power, no government, and no state, then our trouble would be small. But as all ancient authorities agree in attributing to the early Germans a sense of justice and order remarkable in barbarians;

as their institutions still form an important part of the strongest form of government in the old world, and reign triumphant in the new, it seems both interesting in itself, and indispensable to our purpose, to give a brief outline of their principal features.

The German state owed its origin to the union of families into separate but politically connected communities. The freeman chose his place of abode according to his own wants and tastes, without much deference to the wishes of others. There he fixed himself, and established, reared, and ruled his family. But though he thus gratified his individuality, — to him the first necessity, — he stood in close relation to others, as a member of different communities of smaller and greater extent. Those families in whom the principle of association was strongest chose a place for a *villa* (village, in which, however, each house must stand by itself), and common land, to be divided among the occupants according to their wants. Others, living at a greater distance from one another in the midst of their own land (*Mansus*), formed a *Mark;* and these too had, besides their mansi, lands and woods in common. In the earliest times of German history, the *family* had great significance and importance; its rights were respected even in the battle field.[1] On this subject we shall have an opportunity of saying more in a chapter on the Salic Law, in which the *family* is often referred to, and the *village* appears as a close corporation.

[1] Tac. Germ. vii.

The free possessors of land and heads of families, whether living in the stricter union of the villa, or spread through the mark in distant mansi, were members of the political division called *the Hundred;* a term of which the origin can only be guessed at. It has been supposed by some, with a great degree of probability, that it was originally composed of a hundred estates; others have tried to connect the word with a passage of Tacitus[1]; and others again look upon it as a military division. However this may be, it is certain that the numerical meaning of the word was soon as entirely lost as in England at this day. The hundred was a political and probably a territorial division; and itself formed part of the *Gau* (or Canton), the limits of which were not arbitrarily fixed, but varied with the extension of the tribe. Before those great confederations were formed, of which the Franks were one, the gau was a country in itself.[2] Thus, the Sicambri, Bructeri, Ansibarii, &c., each inhabited a gau; in their union, those petty principalities became integral portions of a kingdom.

The state was thus formed by the union of equal and independent freemen, whose rights as citizens were bound up with the possession of land and membership of certain corporate bodies. Freedom and land were the necessary conditions of political existence. We shall see hereafter that there were other

[1] Tac. Germ. xii.

[2] The origin of the Gau is seen in Cæsar, Bell. Gall. vi. 22., and Tac. Germ. xxvi.

inhabitants who were not free, and who stood in no direct relation to the State.

Throughout the whole system, the principle of self-government prevailed in its greatest purity. As the freeman ruled his family, so the villa, the mark, the hundred, the gau, governed itself by means of elected magistrates and popular assemblies, to which every freeman had access.[1] Each of the divisions above mentioned had its Parliament (*Mallus*, *Thing*, &c.), which either managed local affairs, as in the hundred, or exercised supreme authority over the whole tribe, as in the gau. These assemblies of the whole body of freemen had a triple capacity,—the local or political one just mentioned, that of a court of justice, and that of a council of war. Where the gaus or counties were united into a larger country, this too had its council, in which all rights were represented, all authorities combined, and all the links of the long chain of government united and firmly joined together. To this assembly, however, came not the whole mass of freemen, as to the others, but Deputies (Legationes) from every gau or hundred.

The assembly of which Tacitus has given us a graphic description was the sovereign assembly of the gau.

"They meet," he says,—"unless something fortuitous or unexpected intervenes—on certain fixed days, either at the new or full moon."[2] They come to

[1] *Tac. Germ.* xii. "*Eliguntur* in iisdem conciliis et *principes*, qui jura per pagos vicosque reddant."

[2] Tac. Germ. xi.

the place of assembly in arms, as befits their freedom, and slowly and irregularly, to show their independence. The transaction of business was preceded by a feast[1] which, according to him, seems to have been necessary to dissolve the natural reserve of their character. Whether they have to consult on the reconciliation of enemies, or the formation of new alliances, or to determine the questions of peace or war, they generally deliberate during a banquet; thinking that at no other time is the mind so accessible to *sincere* thoughts, or so capable of being warmed to *great* ones. The nation, neither astute nor crafty, reveal the secrets of their breasts in the license of joviality. The opinions thus unreservedly revealed are reconsidered on the following day. . . . "They deliberate when they cannot feign, they make their decision when they cannot err."

When they are all assembled at the appointed place, the chief priest of the nation comes forward, commands silence, and begins to take the auspices in the manner described above.[2] If the lots were favourable, the meeting was constituted and the proceedings commenced; if otherwise, no consultation could be held on that day. "On minor matters," continues Tacitus, "the Principes (the magistrates of the gaus or hundreds) consult—on the more important, all,"[3] but in such amanner that the magistrates first considered the matter thoroughly, and then laid it before thepeople for their decision. The absolute authority of the

[1] Tac. Germ. xxii. [2] P. 29. [3] Tac. Germ. xi.

popular will, and the limited nature of the power which the chiefs and even the kings themselves (where such existed) can have exercised, is deducible from another part of the same chapter. "The assembly is addressed," he says, "now by the king, now by a magistrate (princeps), and now by other persons, according as they are distinguished by age, nobility, military glory, or eloquence; and they influence their hearers rather by the power of persuasion than the right of command."

We learn from the writings of Cæsar and Tacitus that the form of government varied in different German states, some of which were pure democracies[1], while others were ruled by a petty king—elected, but elected for life. Tacitus also mentions states where pure monarchy prevailed; but these were exceptional, and entirely out of the usual German *norm*. We have preferred to describe the constitution of the democratic states, because by doing so we give the best idea of the characteristic German polity; and because the magistrate kings of the Germans were something superadded to the social structure, and did not materially affect the general principle of self-government by popular assemblies. The very limited nature of the power of the kings is a proof that that power was not gained through any violent political convulsion.[2] Ger-

[1] *Cæsar. Bell. Gall.* vi. 23.: "In pace nullus est communis magistratus, sed principes regionum atque pagorum inter suos jus dicunt, controversiasque minuunt."

[2] *Tac. Germ.* viii.: "Nec Regibus infinitæ aut libera potestas; et Duces exemplo potius quam imperio præsunt."

man royalty was of native growth, and differed essentially from any other type of kingship.[1] Its origin may have been different in different tribes. In some the *Dux* who was chosen in war established himself so firmly in his seat as to receive the obedience of the *Principes* in time of peace. The leaders of the Frankish tribes were originally called Dukes, and ruled their gaus with monarchical, but evidently very limited powers. The principal difference, as we have said, between the kings in the monarchical, and the Principes or magistrates in the democratic states, was, that the former were elected for life, and that the office was confined to certain families. The length of time for which the mere magistrate of the gau was chosen is uncertain, but we know that he was responsible to those who chose him: the office was open to every freeman, without distinction of birth. Where the royal power was extended over an union of gaus, it is probable that the king had the right of nominating the magistrates (principes).

We have hitherto confined our attention to those orders of men who alone enjoyed political existence and constituted the state, — the kings — and the freemen or *Ingenui*. Below these, last in the social scale, and only connected with the body politic through them, were the *Liberti* or freedmen, the *Liti* or hereditary bondsmen of the soil, and the *Servi* or proper slaves. Of the Liberti, Tacitus remarks that their condition was not far removed from that of the

[1] *Tac. Annal.* xiii. 54.: "Auctore Verrito et Malorige *qui nationem eam regebant, in quantum Germani regnantur.*"

slave,—that they seldom, except in countries where royal power prevailed, attained to any influence in the family, and never in the state.[1] In the Salic law we find them under the protection or *mundium* of a master.

The Liti, though not free, formed a distinct order, and probably differed from the Servi both in the manner in which they fell into the servile condition, and in the services required of them. When a country was conquered and taken permanent possession of by German settlers, the former owners of the land were in some cases compelled to cultivate it for the profit of their new lords. They answered therefore to the *Coloni* of the Romans. Like these, they paid a fixed rent in kind to their masters, who allowed them to live in a house of their own, and to enjoy with some degree of security whatever was left to them after fulfilling the imposed conditions. Such were the Liti, who, although they too were the absolute property of others, enjoyed, on sufferance and by custom,—which often gives a sort of right to those who have no rights, —a certain modicum of independence.[2]

But the class of Servi was formed from the prisoners taken with arms in their hands, who were considered as a saleable part of the victor's booty. On the same footing were those who forfeited their liberty in gaming, when the frenzied player staked

[1] Tac. Germ. xxv.

[2] *Tac. Germ.* xxv.: "Suam quisque sedem, suos penates regit. Frumenti modum dominus aut pecoris aut vestis, ut colono, injungit."

himself and lost.[1] To the services required from this class there was no limit. Like beasts of the field, they received as much as was necessary to enable them to serve their masters, and no more. Without rights, without protection from the law, they were regarded as the mere chattels of their owner, to be scourged, or broken on the wheel, or slaughtered at his pleasure.

We have purposely deferred the consideration of the disputed question, as to the existence or non-existence of an order of nobility among the Franks, on account of its close connection with their military constitution—the subject of the next-following pages. The generally received opinion is that of Eichhorn and Savigny; who infer, from some passages in Tacitus, that the Franks had an hereditary class of nobles, with exclusive political, military, and even priestly rights and privileges.[2] According to these writers, the "*Principes*" of Tacitus are the predecessors and ancestors of the *Antrustiones* and the *feudal chiefs* of still later times. The controversy turns upon the interpretation of the word princeps, and a few passages which speak of the formation of a military retinue. It must be confessed that the language of Tacitus is very obscure on this subject; and that it is impossible to find a sense for some of his terms, which is equally suitable to every

[1] Tac. Germ. xxiv.

[2] Eichhorn, Deutsche Staats- und Rechts-Geschichte. Göttingen 1843. Savigny, Rechtsgeschichte des Adels.

passage in which they occur.[1] He certainly seems to speak of a class superior to the "*Ingenui*,"[2] though he assigns them no place in the state above the simple freeman. Nor are traces of the early existence of a German nobility altogether wanting in documents of later times.[3] In the laws of the Bavarians mention is made of five noble families, whose *weregeld* was fixed at double that of an ordinary freeman. *In the Salic law, however, there is no allusion to such an order.* If it ever existed among the Salians, it must either have died out, or have been so utterly destitute of privileges of any kind as to leave no trace in a code of laws in which all the different orders of men are very accurately distinguished. Even in those tribes in which the existence of nobles can hardly be doubted, their numbers appear to have been very small. We have seen above that the

[1] E. g. compare the use of the word Princeps in *Tac. Germ.* x., xii., and xiii.

[2] *Tac. Annal.* xi. 17.: "Quando *nobilitate* ceteros anteiret. *Tac. Hist.* iv. 15.: "Brinno *claritate natalium* insigni." *Id.* iv. 55.: "Classicus *nobilitate* opibusque ante alios." Conf. *Tac. Germ.* viii.: "Puellæ *nobiles*." Ibid. xiii. *Velleius Paterc.* 108.: "Maroboduus juvenis *genere nobilis*." Strabo says that Marobod rose ἐξ ἰδιώτου.

[3] Grimm (*Deutsche Reichsalterthümer*, p. 269.) says: "Da der Adel überhaupt angesehen werden muss, *nicht als ein ursprünglich von dem Stande der Freien verschieden vielmehr als ein aus ihm durch die nähere Beziehung auf die Würde des Herrschers und Königs hervorgegangen*," &c. Waitz, Verfassung's-Gesch. i. p. 81.: "*Worin der Adel bestand? Ich weiss es mit Bestimmtheit nicht zu sagen, und alle Zeugnisse geben keine Antwort.*" Barth, Urgesch. ii. p. 415.

Bavarians had only *five* such families. Of the Cherusci, Tacitus informs us that the whole of their nobility had been destroyed in civil discord, so that they were obliged to send to Rome for the sole remaining scion of the royal stock. These facts have suggested the idea that the old nobility of the Franks had disappeared in the course of time, with the sole exception of the Merovingian family, to whom was left the exclusive privilege of furnishing kings to the several Frankish tribes.

The inquiry is, however, of less importance, because, even if such a class existed among the Franks at an earlier period, it had wholly disappeared before their history commences; and all the attempts that have been made to connect it with the newly-formed nobility of a subsequent age have been entirely fruitless. At the time when the Salic law was composed, the *Ingenui* had no superiors but their king, and such of their own class as derived from royal favour or popular election the temporary and responsible authority of office.

In a nation like the Franks, whose favourite pursuit and most important business were war and conquest, the constitution of the army is a subject of the greatest interest. The foundation of their military system was the obligation of every freeman to serve the king in his own wars, on conditions determined rather by custom and precedent than by any legislative enactment.

The migrations and conquests of the Germans were, for the most part, made by whole tribes or

nations; moving in obedience to a decree of their central government, under regularly constituted leaders. The *ban*, which summoned the nation to war, was published by the king or temporary dux. The freemen of the various divisions of the country assembled under their respective leaders, and set forward to the general *rendezvous* of the entire army. When they had new settlements in view, they were accompanied on their march by their children and wives, who, on many occasions, appear to have played no mean or unimportant part.

But, besides the wars and conquests in which the whole nation took part, we have accounts of expeditions undertaken by enterprising leaders at the head of volunteers, with a view to plunder and adventure. The passages of Cæsar and Tacitus, where they speak of the mode in which the *Comitatus* was formed, are very differently interpreted by different writers, and have never yet received an entirely satisfactory explanation.

It is clear, however, that the Comitatus was strictly subordinate to the authorities of the state in which it was formed. It had, in fact, the character of a corps of volunteers, which sometimes acted in concert with the regular army, and sometimes engaged alone in freebooting expeditions against the public enemy. "In the council," says Cæsar, "when one of the chiefs declares that he will be the leader of such an expedition, and calls on those who are willing to follow him to come forward,—all who approve of

the cause and the man rise up and promise their assistance."[1]

The transaction is here described as taking place in the great council of the nation; in the presence, therefore, of the regularly constituted authorities of the country. "If," says Tacitus, "the State in which the Comitatus has been formed grows torpid in the idleness of a lengthened peace, most of the noble youths voluntarily go to those nations which are carrying on war, both because repose is disagreeable to the German nation, and because a great Comitatus can only be maintained by war and rapine."[2] We have here an unmistakable recognition of the fact that the Comitatus was subject to the control of the regular government, and could only carry on its operations against the declared enemies of the state.

The next point in connection with this inquiry concerns the leaders of these voluntary corps. Who had the right of forming a Comitatus? According to Eichhorn and Savigny, it was the exclusive privilege of the hereditary nobles; others confine it to the magistrates of the gaus. The former of these suppositions is entirely inconsistent with the general views we have taken of the political system of the Germans. Nor can we agree with Waitz and Roth, in confining the privilege to the chiefs of the gau. The language of Tacitus does not warrant such a limitation.[3] No doubt the right of keeping a mili-

[1] Cæs. Bell. Gall. vi. 23. [2] Tac. Germ. xiv.

[3] *Tac. Annal.* xi. 16, 17.: "Nec patrem (Flavium) rubori, quod fidem adversus Romanos *volentibus Germanis* sumptam,

tary retinue was most frequently exercised by them, but there is no need to restrict it to any single class. Where a nobility existed, the Comitatus might be formed by an eminent member of that order. Nor would the privilege be denied to any freeman distinguished for his military talents, and possessed of sufficient means to undertake so heavy a responsibility. But by whomsoever these military retinues were formed, they could only act under the authority of the general government.

A right understanding of the passages above quoted is of the greatest importance, because their misinterpretation by some of the most eminent of modern historians has been the means of introducing considerable difficulty and confusion into the history of the middle ages. It is on the supposed authority of these passages and one of the formulæ of Marculf, that the feudal system, which was the gradual growth of ages, and was not completely established before the 8th or 9th century, has been introduced full-blown into the 5th and 6th.[1] Eichhorn and Savigny suppose that the greater number of the conquests made by the Germans were not affairs of the community at all, but made by the nobles at the head of their free companies. In their opinion, those who bound themselves

nunquam omisisset." Italicus had been objected to by some Germans, on the ground that his father had fought on the side of the Romans: "contra patriam ac Deos penates." It would appear, from this passage, that even individual chiefs had to obtain leave before they could enter a foreign service.

[1] Marculfi Formulæ (ap. Baluz. Capit. Reg. Franc. tom. ii.).

to a particular leader in the manner before described were relieved from the military obligations to the state; nor was the leader himself in any way responsible to the government for the service on which he employed his free-company. "Many German nations," says Eichhorn, "owe their very origin to a body of this kind, which had followed its noble leader in some adventurous campaign."[1] The nobles in their turn he represents as forming the Comitatus of the king; and thus it needed but the possession of land, which was soon supplied by the conquest of Gaul, to make the feudal system as complete under Clovis, as under William the Norman after the conquest of England.

The impossibility of reconciling such a theory with the political institutions of the Franks at that early period, will become more and more evident as we proceed; the perception of the difficulties to which it has given rise has been the principal incitement to several modern writers to reconsider the whole subject. The theory of Eichhorn has been abundantly proved to run counter to the whole tenour of history. Neither Gregory of Tours nor the compilers of the Salic law knew anything of a Frankish nobility at all, nor of any class of men possessing such extraordinary powers as have been by some ascribed to them — powers which, if exercised in the unshackled manner supposed, would render almost every form of government impossible. The effect of

[1] Eichhorn, Rechtsgesch. des Adels, sec. 14. p. 62.—sec. 16. p. 75.

such anomalous authority, where it did exist, is strikingly set forth in Cæsar's Gallic War.[1]

There were, as we have said, two kinds of military expeditions: that in which the whole nation moved under its regularly appointed leaders for the acquisition of booty or territory; and that in which the magistrate of the gau or other distinguished personage collected a free company or small army under his command, and led it against the *enemies* of his country. The operations of the Comitatus were, generally speaking, of no great moment, and had plunder for their principal object; while all the more important military movements, such as retreat before a superior enemy, or the conquest of new settlements, were undertaken by the whole people in arms, of which the Comitatus formed but an integral part.

No point in the history of the Frankish settlement in Gaul has been more frequently discussed without any satisfactory result than the meaning of the word *Leudes*, which is applied to a portion of the Frankish army. The theory respecting the Leudes hitherto almost universally received is that of Montesquieu and Eichhorn.[2] These writers place the chief difference between the position of the Franks in Gaul before and after the conquests of Clovis in this, that in the former period the Frankish settlers took possession of the land by lot and in their own right; while in the latter, all land not occupied by the Romance popula-

[1] Bell. Gall. i. 17, 18.

[2] Montesquieu, Esp. des Lois, ch. xvi.

tion became crown property, and was arbitrarily apportioned to his followers by the king. By receiving property of this nature, a person entered, as they suppose, into a new and specific relation to the sovereign, essentially differing from that in which all freemen stood to the head of the state. This relation was formed by receiving a grant of land, taking an oath of fealty to the king, and contracting a special obligation to serve him in his wars. Thus in Neustria, Aquitaine, and Burgundy, according to this theory, where all that was taken from the provincial inhabitants became crown property, the greater portion of the Frankish settlers were Leudes: while in Austrasia, in which lay the earlier acquisitions of the Franks, the number of this class was very limited. Of the Leudes, again, there was a select number called *Antrustiones*, distinguished probably by the larger amount of land they had received, and a closer personal relation to the king. These are regarded by Eichhorn and Savigny as the successors of the ancient nobility, from whom they inherited the sole right of leading a Comitatus[1] (Arimannia), exemption from

[1] The well-rounded theory of the Arimannia (comitatus) of the Antrustiones is deduced from a single and doubtful passage in the Formul. of Marculf, which relates to the oath of fealty taken by the Antrustio: "De Regis Antrustione. Rectum est ut qui nobis fidem pollicentur inlæsam, nostro tueantur auxilio. Et quia ille fidelis, Deo propitio, noster veniens ibi in palatio nostro *una cum Arimannia sua* in manu nostra trustem et fidelitatem nobis visus est conjurasse," &c. In the first place we must mention that the reading of the MSS. is *arma*, which Pithon, taking umbrage at the grammatical error, changed to

taxes, and a general superiority in personal dignity and influence over the simple freeman. The difficulty of reconciling the exclusive rights and duties of the Leudes with the state of things which existed in the subsequent Carlovingian period, is evaded by an alleged extension by Charlemagne of the oath of fealty — originally taken by the Leudes alone — to the entire population of the empire.

The very slight historical foundation on which this theory rests, its incompatibility with innumerable passages in history of an opposite tendency, have led the acute and learned M. Roth and others to deny altogether the existence of the Leudes as a peculiar class.[1] According to Roth, the liability to serve the king in war, which has been attributed exclusively to them, was common to all freemen from the very beginning of the monarchy. The word Leudes, in his opinion, is strictly synonymous with "*Fideles*," and is used simply of all subjects in their military relation to the king. It gives no slight countenance to this novel view of the matter, that the word Leudes, the name of a class by which, in the commonly received theory, almost all wars were carried on, and all the more important con-

Arimannia,—a mere conjecture — "*too weak a peg*," says Loebell, "*to hang a whole theory upon*." Marculf, i. 18. Vid. Loebell, p. 161.

[1] The word Leudes is used in very different senses. Fredegar uses it for laymen, in contrast with *Ecclesiastici;* and when the author of the Gesta Francor. has to translate it, he does so by *Duces* and *Principes*. Conf. Roth, Gesch. des Beneficialwesens. Erlangen, 1850.

quests made, occurs only *three times* in the History of Gregory of Tours. The peculiar obligations, too, erroneously attributed to the Leudes exclusively, — viz., the oath of fealty, and liability to serve the king in war, — may be clearly proved to have been universal.

The position and privileges of the *Antrustiones* are better established; they answer on the one side to the *Comites* of Tacitus, and on the other to the *Vassi* of the Carlovingian period. They were the constant attendants of the monarch, and derived from this close relation a high degree of personal consideration. We find their lives protected in the Salic law by a triple *weregeld;* and though in the earlier part of the Merovingian period they were distinguished from other freemen only by their relation to the king (a relation into which any man might hope to enter), yet it is from them that the great feudal and territorial aristocracy was gradually developed.

According to the view now given of the constitution of the Frankish army, we must regard the conquest of Gaul as having been made, not by bands of freebooters under robber chieftains, nor even by the king at the head of a particular class of his subjects, called Leudes, but by the whole Salian tribe under their hereditary monarch, who marched at their head, surrounded by a devoted train of warlike Antrustiones.

Each division of the army was led by a gau magistrate, who arranged his men according to their *families*, that the presence of those whom they held

dearest might nerve their arm and sustain their courage in the hour of danger. And here and there was seen a company of eager and impetuous warriors, formed with the consent of the nation, but marching under a chosen leader of their own, to whom they had in a more special manner devoted their services and lives.

CHAP. VIII.

STATE OF GAUL AT THE TIME OF THE FRANKISH CONQUEST.

"THE fall of the Western Roman Empire," says M. Guizot, "presents a most singular phenomenon. Not only does the nation fail to support the government in its struggle with the barbarians, but the nation, when left to itself, makes no attempt at resistance on its own account; nay more, there is nothing in this long struggle which reveals to us that any nation exists."

Almost the sole exception to this remark is found in the famous "Complaint of the Britons," recorded by the venerable Bede, in which they lament that "the barbarians drove them into the sea, and the sea drove them back again upon the barbarians."

M. Guizot attributes this extraordinary absence of that national spirit—which has often enabled a nation weak in numbers and resources to withstand the most powerful conquerors—to the destruction of the middle classes in the *Municipia*, by the ruinous exactions made from them to supply the necessities of the sinking empire. In the better days of Rome

the office of *Decurion* in the municipal towns of Italy and Gaul was coveted as an honourable distinction, and the community was only taxed for its own advantage. Under Diocletian, however, a system of taxation was introduced, the sole object of which was to procure money for the emperor, an object which was pursued with an utter disregard of consequences.

When an impoverished municipium was unable to furnish the appointed sum, *the Curiæ*, which included all the middle classes and their decurion, were made answerable for the deficit with their private fortunes. Nor was there any escape from this crushing responsibility. Every man whose estate exceeded twenty-five arpents was a member of the Curia; and what rendered the weight of the obligation heavier and more vexatious by placing it on fewer shoulders, was, that all the clergy and the civil and military functionaries were exempt. The miserable victims of imperial avarice sought refuge by thousands in the Church; and it was found necessary to exclude the possessors of property from every office which brought exemption with it.

The fearful condition into which the middle classes were brought, by this selfish and cruel policy, is set forth in vivid but not exaggerated colours by Salvianus. "Robbed and tormented by bad and cruel judges, they are compelled to become *bagaudæ* (brigands), and thus their own misery is charged upon themselves; we impute to them what we ourselves have done. We call those rebels and abandoned men whom we have driven into crime; . . . . but

what else could those unhappy people do who suffer under the frequent, nay unceasing, exactions of the state? over whom a terrible and interminable proscription is ever impending,—who desert their dwellings that they may not be tortured in their own homes,—who seek exile that they may avoid punishment?"

Besides the very influential cause of apathy above described, on the part of the provincial inhabitants of Gaul, we must not forget the emasculating effect of Roman rule on all the nations subject to it. This effect was produced partly by the systematic efforts of the Romans to depress, and, as far as possible, to root out the national feelings of those whom they subdued; and partly, also, by the inveterate habit the provincials had acquired of looking for protection to the Roman legions, rather than to themselves. The same phenomena occur in Gaul as in Britain: and the Gauls were as little able to resist the incursions of the Franks, as the Britons those of the Scots or Saxons. Long dependence—the habit of unmurmuring, or at least unresisting, submission to the most odious tyranny—the natural aptitude of their race for vicious and enervating refinements[1] (the effects of which are always worse in proportion as those who adopt them are less civilised), all these causes combined to bring the Gauls into that despicable condi-

[1] Tacitus (Agricolæ Vita, c. xxi.), speaking of the Britons, says: "Paullatimque discessum ad delinimenta vitiorum, porticus et balnea, et conviviorum elegantiam: *idque apud imperitos 'humanitas' vocabatur, cum pars servitutis esset.*"

tion in which independence is an intolerable burden. The Franks, in the fresh energy of their nascent power, were scarcely more in want of subjects to command, than the Gallo-Romans of masters to obey.

What has been said, may perhaps suffice to account for the uncomplaining submissiveness with which the Frankish conquerors were received in Gaul; though there are many other causes of the same tendency, which will be considered in another chapter. We have now to account for a phenomenon of an opposite kind, viz., the influence and power which the conquered Romans acquired over, or rather among, the conquerors. In considering this point, we must not forget the effect of mere numbers, in which the Romance inhabitants had the advantage throughout the whole of Western Gaul. They had, moreover, what was of far greater importance, the traditions of Roman glory, settled institutions, habits of business, a well developed language, and, above all, they had the Christian religion. Against the contempt with which the Franks regarded them as conquered, and *easily* conquered dependants, as weak and unwarlike slaves of luxury, their minds were sustained by the conscious superiority of civilised men over barbarians, of the learned over the ignorant, of Christians over heathens. As long as it was a question of martial spirit and bodily strength, so long the Frank was the superior; but as soon as a more settled state of things succeeded, and the provinces which had been conquered had to be *governed*, and the wealth which had been acquired to be enjoyed; then, the mental power, the extended

views, the knowledge of affairs, and the thousand trifling arts of cheering and adorning life, which the Romans possessed, asserted their value and found a field for their display.

In the collision of minds which followed the conflict of arms, the weaker and less disciplined were obliged to yield; and here the advantage was all on the side of the Romans. Nor could the issue of the struggle between Christianity and heathenism,—between a form (though an imperfectly developed and corrupted one) of Divine truth and human error, remain for any long time doubtful. Clovis had little difficulty in defeating the Gallo-Roman armies, but he had no force to bring against the Christian priesthood and the strongholds of the Christian Church. The high social position, the learning and personal dignity of its ministers, its magnificent temples and splendid ritual, were not opposed by any equivalent forces on the other side. The vantage ground which the Roman soldier had lost in the battle-field, was in some degree recovered by the Roman priest, when he brought the conqueror into the pale of a Church to whose highest offices the lowest of the conquered might aspire. Nor was the victory of Clovis over Syagrius at Soissons more complete or more lasting in its effects, than that of the Romans over Clovis at his baptism — a victory proclaimed by St. Remi at the font in the well-known words, "bow the neck, Sicambrian."[1]

This brief outline of the state of Gaul at the period

[1] "Mitis depone colla Sicamber!"

of the Frankish conquest may assist us to understand the mode in which the settlement of the Franks was made; and how the political institutions which have had so great an effect in determining the character and fate of Europe were gradually developed by the joint efforts and under the mutual influences of the two races.

The prevailing views on these subjects are in accordance with the error already mentioned, of referring to the *fifth* century a state of things known under the name of *feudalism* which did not exist before the *eighth* and *ninth*.

According to those writers who consider the conquest of Gaul to have been made by Clovis, not at the head of the Salian nation at large, but of a class of military dependants called Leudes, the conquered territory was taken possession of without the slightest regard to the rights of the previous owners; and that too, not in the name, or for the benefit, of the whole nation, but as private booty of the royal vassals. The Romans, they suppose, were indeed allowed, or rather compelled, to remain in their own dwellings, and to continue the cultivation of the fields; but no longer for their own advantage. They were, in short, according to this view of the matter, deprived of all civil rights, and degraded almost to the condition of serfs.

The widely different account which we have given of the military and social constitution of the Franks in their original seats, justifies and indeed necessitates a different view of their settlement in Gaul.

"It is not true," says Montesquieu, "that the Franks, on their entrance into Gaul, occupied all the landed estates in the country, to make fiefs of them. Some writers have thought so, because towards the end of the second dynasty they see that all the land had *become* fiefs." [1] And again he says: "The conclusion which it has been attempted to draw, that the barbarians made a general regulation to establish everywhere the feudal tenure of land, is no less false than the premises. If, at a time when the fiefs were *amovible*, all the land had consisted of fiefs, and all the men in the kingdom of vassals, or their dependent serfs; then, since he who has the property has the power, the king, who from time to time disposed of the fiefs (i. e. of the only existing property), would have possessed an authority as great as that of the Sultan of Turkey, — a supposition which overthrows all history."

The gist of the matter is admirably set forth in the foregoing passage. The upholders of the hypothesis of which Montesquieu attempts to show the vanity, are unable to prove what is sufficient for their purpose without proving a great deal too much; viz., the establishment of the feudal system in its full integrity before the end of the fifth century, — a conclusion which cannot be maintained.

Yet so general is the belief in the Vandalic cruelty of the conquerors of Gaul, and the degraded position in which the provincial population stood to their barbarian masters, that while nobles of France have

[1] Montesquieu, Esp. des Lois, lib. xxx. c. v.

been proud to trace their descent from Frankish warriors, the democratic writers of the same country have represented the French revolution as an attempt on the part of the *Celts* to regain the freedom of which Clovis and his German followers once deprived them![1]

This generally received opinion respecting the Frankish settlement in Gaul seems to be chiefly founded on arguments derived —

1st. From the arbitrary treatment which the provincial population in *other* parts of the dismembered Roman empire received at the hands of their German invaders.

2nd. From the manner in which the Franks themselves appear to have acted in their *first* settlement in Gaul (before the age of Clovis), in the ancient Salic land.

3rd. From the Salic law, in which the life of a Roman is protected by a lower weregeld than that of a Frankish freeman.

With respect to the analogy drawn from the practice of the Vandals and the Ostrogoths in Italy, there is no lack of reasons for rejecting it as quite inapplicable to the conquest of Gaul by Clovis. Apt and eager as were the Gauls, when once their fitful ferocity had been tamed by the blows of Cæsar, to ape the manners and vices of their Roman models, they neither had had time nor means to reach that fearful depth of corruption and degradation in which the Italians had been

[1] Thierry, Eugene Sue, and others.

sunk for ages; and in so far they merited and experienced a less degree of contempt at the hands of their conquerors. Again, the national antipathy between Goths or Vandals and Romans was exaggerated by the theological odium of Catholics and Arians; while a common creed, of which the conquered were the interpreters and priests, became a powerful bond of union between Clovis, "the eldest son of the Church," and his provincial subjects.

Nor can we, in the next place, safely draw conclusions as to the fate of the Gallic provinces subdued by Clovis, from the cruel oppression to which the original inhabitants of the old Salian lands in the Delta of the Rhine were subjected.

The conquest of Gaul by the Franks was not made all at once, as we have seen, but by successive stages; and different portions of the country were taken possession of on different terms. In the Batavian Islands, the Salians do appear indeed to have paid very little regard to "vested interests." The harsh treatment which the provincial population met with in this country is abundantly proved by the fact that heathenism not only existed in Toxandria and Brabant[1] as late as the sixth century, but was actu-

[1] *Roth's Beneficialw.* p. 66.: "Eleutherii I. 20. Feb. 3. 187. Congregatis Senioribus populi tribunus Scandiniensis cum omni multitudine paganorum decrevit ut omnes tam nobiles quam ignobiles Christianæ religionis cultores Tornacensi urbe ejicerentur, et de suis possessionibus omnino privarentur." In Toxandria and Brabant the traces of heathenism were found as late as the middle of the eighth century, when many inhabitants of the Ardennes were converted to Christianity.

ally predominant, a fact which implies the utter degradation of the Christian inhabitants.

But during the period between the earliest and latest conquest of the Franks in Gaul, many circumstances combined to lessen the animosity between the two nations, and to bring them nearer to one another. When Clovis became chief of his tribe, the Salians and Gallo-Romans were no longer strangers; they had lived in near neighbourhood, though in mutual independence, for a long series of years, and had doubtless exercised a mutual influence. We find them fighting on the same side against the Huns, at the great battle of Châlons. Childeric, the father of Clovis, served many campaigns under the Romans, and when he was expelled for his vices by his Salian subjects, the latter did not disdain to transfer their allegiance to the Roman Syagrius; a fact which speaks very strongly in favour of the existence of a good understanding between the two peoples.

The very character of the crafty and politic Clovis, — his conversion to Catholic Christianity, — the devoted respect he paid to the Roman priesthood, and his joyful acceptance of Roman titles and insignia, — seem to point the same way, and to prove that he, at least, felt no hatred against the provincials, and was far from wishing to alienate their affections, or to render them comparatively useless to himself by despoiling them of their property. It was not his object to destroy them, but to rule over them as the successor of their Roman lords. Nor did any necessity exist to compel him to the impolicy of general

confiscation or forced partition of the land; measures which would have rendered his conquest far more difficult, less secure, and less advantageous. A sufficient quantity of land for his own wants, and for the liberal reward of his followers, accrued to him from other sources.

In the first place, he became possessed of all the confiscated lands of those who had resisted him, whether they survived or not. He may also have received portions of land from the wealthier Romans, as a sort of peace offering; which they could well afford to pay, since they were relieved from the enormous exactions of imperial tyranny.

Secondly, he had an undisputed claim to all lands not actually in private possession [1]; and lastly, to the revenues, the tolls, the patronage in Church and State, the rights, claims, and privileges, in short, of whatever kind, which had belonged to the former government.

The land which fell in this manner to the royal fiscus, was taken possession of in the name of the king; and not, like the Batavian Islands, by the community at large, with a view to equal partition. The settlement was made by royal decree or permission; and the grants of land with which the king endowed such as he deemed worthy were made, in Merovingian times at least, *in full and free possession.*

In this important respect, therefore, the free and unconditional gifts of Clovis and his race differed

[1] Roth's Beneficialw. pp. 68. 70. 73. The Formulæ Marculfi (of the year 660 A.D.) relate only to hereditary grants.

materially from the *Beneficia* of Carlovingian times, with which they have been so generally confounded. The estate which had been originally granted to a warrior, as a reward for his services, or as his share in the booty, was allowed to pass to a woman or a monk, from whom no military service could possibly be exacted.[1] The Salian Frank of Picardy and Flanders—which countries were taken possession of by the people at large, without the intervention of the king — stood in exactly the same relation to the monarch as the Salian in Aquitaine or on the Seine — where, according to some writers, all the grants were made on strictly feudal conditions.

But of all the arguments brought forward to prove the degradation of the Romans, the weightiest are derived from the fact that, in the Salic law, a lower *weregeld* is set upon the lives and limbs of a provincial than upon those of the Frankish *ingenuus*.

The origin of this marked distinction has been sought in various directions. To some writers the lower weregeld is a sign of positive loss of freedom, and of the right of holding landed property. Others see in it chiefly the pride of the conquerors and the humiliation of the vanquished, whose noblest freeman was degraded to the level of the Frankish *litus*, by having his person and life valued at the same price. None of these views are satisfactory, or even free from insurmountable objections. The very fact that the Roman had a weregeld set upon him at

[1] Roth's Beneficialw. b. iii. p. 203.

all is a proof of freedom; because it was a composition for his right of seeking vengeance when injured in his person and family; a right which, according to the German notions of honour, none but the free-born man could possess. It is true that the litus and the slave had a weregeld too, the former as high as that of the free Roman, but in this case the fine was *paid to the master*, and not to the actual sufferers; and was nothing more than a *compensation for injured property*.[1] The practice of claiming compensation for every resignation of the sacred right to vengeance was peculiar to the Germans, and was not only adhered to by them in their new settlements, but communicated to the Romans. The latter, we know, were governed by their own code of laws in all matters where only Romans were concerned; but as one of the parties in a dispute must often have been a Frank, it was absolutely necessary that they should meet on some common ground,—that common ground was the *weregeld*, which made the provincial master of his own life and limb, and gave him the choice of vengeance or compensation, whenever his rights were invaded.

That the sum by which his right of revenge was bought off was less in the case of a Roman than of a Frank, is hardly to be wondered at. It would have denoted a degree of humility which few men under such circumstances (and certainly not the Franks)

[1] Lex Sal. Pact. x. 1.: "*Si quis servum* AUT *cavallum vel jumentum* furaverit," &c. This passage reminds one of many a transatlantic advertisement.

would possess, to think no more highly of themselves than of the people in whose land they had settled down by force of arms. They did not, and could not, think the life of any Roman of equal value with that of a Frankish *ingenuus*. Without therefore depriving the Roman of his freedom, they expressed their sense of the inferiority of his origin by giving him a lower weregeld. An analogous case may be seen in the laws of the Burgundians, who had a nobility above the freeman, where the weregeld of the noble is half as large again as that of the *mediocris* or ordinary *ingenuus*. In the Ripuarian laws the weregeld of a free Burgundian or other German was lower than that of a Frank[1]; by which nothing more could be expressed than national self-consciousness and pride.

The very variety of the hypotheses which have been formed, regarding the relative position of the two races to one another in Gaul, is a proof how singular and anomalous the state of that country was after the settlement of the Franks. The institutions and laws which the Germans had brought with them, and to which they were strongly attached, came into close contact with those of the Romans, by which alone the provincial population could be governed. The two systems existed side by side, and could hardly avoid interfering with each other's action and causing conflict and disorder. We must, however, take care

[1] Roth's Beneficialw. pp. 94, 95. Waitz (das alte Salische Recht, p. 102.) lays great stress on the fact that the Salic Laws were published before the time of Clovis; otherwise he thinks they would have been different as regards the position of the provincials.

not to mistake the practice of individuals for institutions of the state, or breaches of the law for the law itself. It is doubtless true that the Romance population did suffer deeply in their property, their rights, and even their persons, from the lawless encroachments of the barbarians, flushed as they were with victory, and conscious of superior strength and courage. It could not be otherwise, and especially in those parts of the country which, from their remoteness, were in a great measure withdrawn from the surveillance of the central government. The poorer and weaker classes, who have in all ages had so much to endure from those on whom they depend, were almost exclusively composed of Gallo-Romans. Those therefore who know how difficult it is for the strongest government, and the most equal laws, to protect the weak and timid from the strong and proud, will readily imagine what must have taken place in an era such as that of Clovis, and in a country on whose vitals a Chilperic and a Fredegunda, with all the ruthless agents of their avarice and cruelty, were allowed to prey. Many a provincial doubtless was despoiled of his property, denied his rights, injured in his person and his honour by the Franks; but it was done, not according to the law, but in spite of it, when the law was weak and retribution lame.

We should never gain much knowledge of constitutional or personal law in England or Scotland, from a history of the border forays; nor must we form our theories, respecting the settlement in Gaul,

from the numerous instances of lawless oppression which we meet with in the Frankish annals.

So far, indeed, were the Gallo-Romans from being reduced *in the mass* to an almost servile condition, that we find them retaining their property, their peculiar laws, customs, language, and dress. The municipal constitutions of their towns also remained in most respects as they had been under the empire, and gave the inhabitants a very considerable degree of self-government. The independence of feeling and action prevalent in the municipia is attested by the fact that one of them made a successful resistance to Clovis; and that, when at a later period their fears had subsided and their spirit returned, they even ventured to make war upon one another on their own account, as in the case of Blois and Orleans, which joined in an attack upon Dunois.[1]

Whatever the Romance population may have suffered immediately after the conquest, their lot was gradually improved in succeeding times. We have already pointed out the many advantages which the provincials enjoyed in their struggle with the less cultivated Franks, and the means they possessed of mingling respect with the contempt with which their conquerors were apt to regard them. And the involuntary feeling of respect was more real and more enduring of the two; and enabled the Romans after no long time to raise themselves in the social scale. Accordingly we find them not only

[1] Greg. Tur. vii. 2. Loebell's Gregor. von Tours, p. 139.

occupying the most important offices in the State as well as in the Church, — which was exclusively their own, — but acting as intimate friends and counsellors of the king, and making themselves notorious for their vast possessions; as, for example, in the case of Gregory of Tours himself, Desiderius of Auxerre, and Duke Lupus of Champagne.[1]

But what speaks more strongly than anything else for the belief in a gradual approach to equality in the position of Franks and Gallo-Romans is the indisputable fact that the office of count of a gau, and general of an army, was frequently held by a Roman. In Auvergne and Tours, indeed, the majority of the counts were provincials. This circumstance is at the same time an additional argument against the common hypothesis that the army of Clovis and his successors was composed, like that of the Vandals and Goths, exclusively of Germans. For we can hardly bring ourselves to believe that a Roman — and that too not in one instance, but frequently — would be placed in the position of commander of an army, from which his countrymen were excluded as a degraded and inferior class.[2]

And if we can find no sufficient reason for taking the common view of the treatment which the Gauls received, even with respect to those parts of Gaul where the Frankish settlers were most numerous,

[1] Roth, p. 81. Bishop Desiderius of Auxerre manumitted 2000 serfs, and *gave* them the land which they had previously occupied as his bondsmen. Other Roman bishops left whole counties in their wills.

[2] Greg. Tur. iv. 13. 42., v. 37. 48., viii. 18. 30.

such a theory must be still less tenable in districts such as Auvergne and Tours, where the conquerors were few in number and scattered through the country. And we have no indication that the provincial in these places stood in any different relation to the general government than the provincial of Metz or Paris.

Had the fate of the Roman inhabitant indeed been so hard, or nearly so hard, as is generally supposed, it would be most remarkable that in the long history of Gregory of Tours, himself a Roman, *there should not be the slightest complaint or hint of the injustice to which his countrymen were subject;* that his pages should not bear a single trace of a struggle between the hostile nationalities. We know that Gregory and others of his class were bold enough in the defence of their rights, even in the presence of the Merovingian kings; and can we believe that they would pass over the spoliation and degradation of their beloved countrymen without one word of protest or even of record?

CHAP. IX.

PERIOD OF TRANSITION FROM MEROVINGIAN TO CARLOVINGIAN INSTITUTIONS.

IN a former chapter we endeavoured to describe the national character and institutions of the Franks before their entrance into Gaul, while they were as yet uninfluenced by the original peculiarities and the superinduced Roman civilisation of the conquered people.

We saw reason to regard the Franks as a German tribe of freemen possessing equal rights, and, as far as may be, equal property. We found them governing and judging themselves in the various divisions and subdivisions of their nation by free assemblies, but differing from some other German tribes in this, that they entrusted the executive authority to a *king* (elected from one family) of limited but considerable power. We considered it probable that the king, had the privilege of appointing counts for the government of the gaus or cantons; and he claimed from his subjects an universal oath of allegiance and gratuitous service in time of war. We saw that the Frankish system both civil and military was founded on the

equal rights and common duties of all freemen; and that these privileges and obligations were essentially personal, and not, as in a subsequent period, attached to the possession of property. In disagreement with writers of very high authority, we expressed our belief that no order of nobility or any privileged class of soldiers under the name of Leudes existed among the Franks, and that freemen were only distinguished from one another by the authority of office — as in the case of the count, or, by the especial favour and protection of the king, in the case of the Antrustio — to which latter distinction not only every freeman, but even bondsmen might aspire.

It will be our object in the present chapter to show whence the widely differing institutions took their rise which we find existing in Carlovingian times, and which, though in process of formation under the Merovingian Dynasty, first make their appearance in a compact and established form in the time of Carl Martel and his great successor. How is it that when the political institutions of the Franks appear again through the retreating mists of historical oblivion, their shape and character are so materially changed? Where are the small but free and independent landholders who once formed the strength marrow of the State? How is it that every man seems to hold all that he has — to live and breathe, as it were, at the will of another? Whence come these mighty seigniors or feudal lords — these proud and princely churchmen — these turbulent and mutinous counts, who with their dependent vassals

destroyed the old German freedom, and shook into ruins the throne of the feeble posterity of Clovis? Those who think they see strong germs of the *beneficial* and feudal systems in the Germania of Tacitus, and their complete establishment by Clovis, when he conquered Gaul and divided it into military fiefs, will find an easy answer to these and similar questions. To this unnaturally simple mode of solving so difficult a question, a careful study of the sources and the ablest commentators upon them have prevented our assenting, and have at the same time given us the means of tracing the gradual transition from the early German to the Merovingian and from the Merovingian to the Carlovingian constitutions; in which last the system of *Beneficia* and the *Seigniorship* played so prominent a part.

This transition is nowhere sudden or violent. Different as they are, the complicated system of the later Carlovingians was developed by a slow and regular process from the institutions which the Franks brought with them into Gaul. The extent and importance, however, of the changes which took place — more particularly in the gradation of social rank and the tenure of landed property — imply the long continued operation of very powerful agents. Among these we may reckon:—

1st. The wealth and eternal civilisation of the Romanized population of Gaul.

2nd. The influence of the Catholic Church and its ministers.

3rd. Some very ancient peculiarities in the political and social system of the Gauls themselves.

One of the most immediate and striking changes produced by Roman influence was a rapid increase in the power of the Frankish king. It would have been easy to foresee how greatly his position must be affected by the conquest of Gaul. The nature of the German monarchy has already been explained. The very mode in which the elevation of the Salian monarch was announced, by placing him on a shield, and exposing him to the gaze of the joyful and applauding multitude who had elected him, is significant of his true position as the leader, not the master, of his people.[1] He had no "libera potestas;" he ruled by persuasion rather than by force[2]; he carried out the laws which the people had enacted, and led his subjects in the wars which they themselves proclaimed.

But the freer the State, in which royalty exists, the less necessity is there that its prerogatives should be accurately ascertained and circumscribed. The encroachments of the German king were warded off, not by the written clauses of a paper constitution, but by the free institutions by which royalty was surrounded, and by the national spirit which kept those institutions in healthy and powerful action. And hence arises the great difficulty we find in determining the exact position of the Merovingian monarchs. In the Salic law, in which the life of

[1] *Tac. Hist.* iv. 15.: ". . . impositusque scuto more gentis et sustinentium humeris vibratus, Dux deligitur."

[2] *Tac. Germ.* vii. xi.: "Auctoritate suadendi magis quam jubendi potestate."

almost every creature, from an *ingenuus* to a *bee*, is protected by a fine, no penalty of any kind is denounced for slaying the king; nor is any reference made to the limits of the royal prerogative. Yet there is no doubt that the penalty of regicide was death, since even the smaller offence of *infidelitas* or *læsa Majestas* was thus punished in Merovingian times.

This uncertainty with respect to the limits of the royal authority, which was harmless and even salutary in a state of liberty, proved to be greatly in favour of the unchecked growth of arbitrary power, when the natural checks upon it were weakened or withdrawn. The position of Clovis too, as the leader of a victorious army and the founder of a new empire, was eminently favourable to an increase of his prerogative. Royalty was almost the only political institution which was not disturbed in its action by the rapid change of fortunes through which the Frankish nations passed. The rights and powers which the deliberative assemblies used to exercise, during a period of migration and conquest, naturally fell to the executive authority, the vigour of which was rather increased than diminished by the change of circumstances. Yet, amidst a purely German nation, the boldest monarch would soon have learned to restrict himself to his legitimate sphere. Even a Clovis was king rather in the German than in the Roman sense. Even he does not venture to claim more than his own share of the common booty[1], and

[1] Greg. Tur. ii. 27.

dreads the displeasure of his people when he is urged to abandon the superstitions of his forefathers.

How different was the light in which a monarch was regarded by the Gauls, who had learned to bow with slavish fear and blasphemous adulation, not only before emperors unworthy of the human form, but before their deputies and the tools and slaves of their deputies! What a contrast must the Romance provincials have presented, when they came, with their studied humility and plausible falsehood, into the presence of their new master, to the bold bearing of the Frankish freeman in the presence of his chief! The conquest of Gaul gave to the rude Salian monarchs a new and very numerous class of subjects, whose servile but graceful homage and unreserved submission not only flattered the self-love of the king and widened the foundations of his throne, but led the Franks themselves, by the force of example, to regard the royal dignity in a different light. To these influences may be added the no slight ones of increased wealth and of that external splendour with which the Romance population well knew how to invest the throne.

But of all the new allies which aided the Frankish kings to exchange the sword of a general and the seat of a judge, for a sceptre and a throne, none was so omnipresent, so active, or so constant and powerful in its operations as the Roman Church. The natural tendency of this institution has, in all ages, been towards royal and even despotic authority, both on account of the analogy with its own hierarchy,

and because the free discussion inseparable from popular governments, and the turbulence of party strife, are unfavourable to its secret influence and its regular and systematic action. On several occasions in the early Frankish history we find the bishops of the Church animating the kings to the exercise of unusual power.[1]

Under such circumstances, the royal power of the Merovingians could not fail to undergo a very rapid development after the conquest of Gaul. Gregory of Tours represents many of the kings, and especially Clotaire and Chilperic, as assuming almost unlimited powers, and indulging in the most cruel and arbitrary acts of tyranny.

So remarkable are many of the cases with which he furnishes us, that it seems as if the *præceptio* of the king could overrule both public law and the most sacred private rights. Thus when Andarchius wishes to marry the daughter of Ursus, a citizen of Avernum, for her money, and is refused by her father, he procures a præceptio from the king, lays it before the judge of the place where the maiden resided, and demands that she be immediately given to him in marriage. So Pappolenus, after causing the niece of Bishop Felix to be dragged from a monastery, in

[1] *Greg. Tur.* ii. 34.: Avitus, Bishop of Vienne, when urging the Burgundian king, Gundobald, publicly to renounce the Arian heresy, uses the following language: "Tu vero cum sis Rex, et a nullo adprehendi formides, seditionem pavescis populi ne Creatorem omnium in publico confitearis. Relinque hanc stultitiam . . . Tu enim es caput populi, non populus caput tuum."

which she had taken refuge, marries her against the will of her relations by virtue of a royal præceptio.[1]

In the matter of taxation also, a point in which we learn from history that nations have at all times been peculiarly sensitive, the actual if not the theoretical power of the kings appears to have been very great. Chilperic and his detestable wife afflicted their people by arbitrary exactions to such a degree as to reduce them to starvation and drive them to rebellion. Fredegunda herself, when her cruel heart had been touched for the moment by the death of her children, feels some remorse for the widely-spread misery she had caused, and burns the tax register in which the victims of her rapacity were noted down.

The very wide interpretation which was given to the word treason (læsa majestas, crimen majestatis, infidelitas patriæ, infidelitas regni Francorum), and the extreme severity with which this offence was punished, are trustworthy indications of the height to which the royal power had risen. Insults offered to the king or his family might be punished with death. We read in Gregory of Tours[2], that the Abbot Lupentius was accused by Count Innocentius of having uttered "profanum aliquid" against Brunhilda; and one of the counts in the charge against Ægidius of Rheims, is that his letters contained several things "de improperiis Brunichildis."

[1] *Greg. Tur.* iv. 47. Ibid. vi. 16. Ibid. viii. 11.: "Regalibusque munitus præceptionibus timere parentum distulit minas."

[2] Greg. Tur. v. 26. Ibid. vi. 37. Ibid. x. 19.

Another form of treason, which was punished with confiscation and death, was that of entering into correspondence with a foreign enemy. So strict was the bond of allegiance which united subjects to their king, that not only was it treason to leave the dominions of one Frankish king to settle in those of another, but the mere quitting the country without permission was a treasonable act, and might be punished by confiscation.[1]

Such facts as these and many others that might be adduced, such as the violent interference of the kings in the course of justice, and the dispensing power which they appear on some occasions to have exercised, are calculated to inspire the belief that their power had become almost despotic. Yet we should be wrong in drawing the full conclusion which they at first sight seem to warrant. We are considering a very anomalous period, in which different principles, institutions, and nationalities, were struggling for existence and mastery, unguided or unrestrained by written laws or even by experience and usage.

The royal power, says Guizot, was "variable et déréglée: aujourd'hui immense, demain nulle; souveraine ici, ignorée ailleurs."[2] The juncture, as we have seen, was peculiarly favourable to the pretensions of royalty, and the more so because at that time no powerful aristocracy existed to resist its encroachments.

[1] Roth, p. 135. [2] Guizot, Hist. Générale, p. 304.

We proceed to trace the gradual rise of a class unknown to the Franks in the earliest centuries of their history, and to which the Salic law contains not the slightest reference. We mean the *seigniors*, whose existence and privileges were not fully recognised or legally guaranteed before the time of the Carlovingian mayors.

And here we are inclined, with Roth, to attribute great influence to the Roman civilisation with which the Gauls were so thoroughly imbued, and to the Catholic Church; but most of all to certain peculiarities in the civil institutions of the ancient Gauls themselves.

The warriors of Clovis, under which designation I include all free subjects capable of bearing arms (and not Leudes only), entered Gaul as freemen, on a footing of political equality, bound together by their common allegiance to the king, and the necessary subordination to the merely official authority of their civil governors and military leaders. Very different was the state of things which they found in Gaul. There existed in that country in the time of Cæsar, and no doubt much earlier, a kind of clanship, and a relation between lord and vassal, unlike anything which is spoken of by Tacitus in his Germania. The great conqueror of Gaul, who had excellent opportunities of becoming acquainted with the constitution of the country in which so large a portion of his military life was passed, has left us a clear though brief account of the Gallic *Comitatus*. He speaks in more than one place of chiefs and generals who, in addition

to their regular forces, had followers called *devoti* or *soldarii*, a body of men devoted by the most solemn and irrevocable engagements to the service of their leader. "Their condition of life is this, that they share all the goods of life with those to whom they have devoted themselves. Should any calamity befal their chiefs, they either share the same fate, or seek a voluntary death; nor was it ever known in the memory of man that one of them had refused to die when his patron had been killed." [1] In another place he says, "Throughout the whole of Gaul there are only two classes of persons who enjoy any degree of rank or distinction; for the plebs are regarded almost in the light of slaves, undertaking nothing of themselves, and sharing in no counsels. Most of them, when oppressed by debt, or by heavy taxes, or the wrongs inflicted on them by the more powerful, enter into a condition of servitude to the nobles, who exercise the same authority over them as masters over their slaves." [2] Cæsar is informed by the Gauls, on one occasion, that there were private persons in their state who exercised great influence over the common people, and who, though private persons, had more power than the magistrates themselves.[3] One of these was Dumnorix, who maintained a large Comitatus at his own expense. Orgetorix is represented as having

[1] *Cæs. Bell. Gall.* iii. 22., vii. 40.: "Litavicus cum suis clientibus, quibus more Gallorum nefas est etiam in extrema fortuna deserere patronos, Gergoviam profugit.

[2] Cæs. B. G. vi. 13.

[3] Cæs. B. G. i. 17. Loebell's Gregor von Tours, pp. 83—88.

escaped the punishment of death, which had been awarded against him, by bringing his whole clan (familiam), to the number of 10,000 men, and all his clients and debtors, to the place of trial. These and similar passages have been most erroneously considered as parallel to the 13th chapter of Tacitus' Germania and some passages in the work of Ammianus Marcellinus.[1] For where has Tacitus ever hinted at the servitude of the German plebs to any class of nobles? or of individuals setting at nought the authority of the magistrates with an army of dependent clients? The honourable devotion of freemen to a king, or a chosen leader, as good subjects or brave companions, has nothing in common with the compelled devotion of the miserable serfs and bankrupts of whom Cæsar speaks. The similarity between the passages thus compared is entirely superficial; their essential difference may be seen on a first perusal.

The interval between class and class thus early existing among the Gauls was rather increased than diminished during their long servitude to the Romans. The Frankish conquerors saw the wealth of the country accumulated in the hands of a few, in contrast with general poverty and dependence. And, though the presence of the Franks in Gaul could not but make some difference to both extremes, yet as the Roman proprietors kept the greater part of their pos-

[1] *Ammian. Marcellin.* xvi. 12.: "Chrodomanus rex Alemmannorum — se dedit, comitesque ejus ducenti numero . . . . flagitium arbitrati post regem vivere, vel pro rege non mori, si ita tulerit casus tradidere se vinciendos."

sessions, and continued to rule over their dependants, they presented to the eyes of the invaders a spectacle of splendour and authority which could not fail to awaken a feeling of rivalry. The rich and fortunate freeman learned to regard himself as the natural superior of his poorer fellow; while the latter, in his turn, became accustomed to the idea of purchasing security and sustenance by the sacrifice of independence. The opposing principles which regulated the ownership and employment of German and Gallic Roman property came into collision, and, as might be expected under the circumstances, the worse prevailed. It became a great object of ambition to amass property in land; and, as it was not easy at that period to convert agricultural produce into money, this accumulation inevitably led to the maintenance of numerous dependants. The active and fortunate became continually richer and more powerful; while the unfortunate, the weak, and foolish, grew poorer and feebler: and losing their rights with their property, sank into a state of hereditary and hopeless dependence. And thus, in the time of Carl Martel, we find a state of things formally acknowledged and established, in which one class of freemen are gradually pressed down into the condition of serfs. An oligarchy of wealth and office arises, which, in still later times, is developed into a *nobility of birth;* and a graduated scale of authority is formed, extending from the monarch to the slave.

But though the foundations of that semi-feudalism, which comes so prominently forward under the

government of Carl Martel, were laid in the earlier part of the Merovingian period, the structure itself did not rise so rapidly as is commonly supposed. A very convincing argument in favour of this statement has been derived from the original meaning of certain words which, in later times, denoted the mutual relation of lordship and dependence. The Vassus or Vassallus, which in Carlovingian times signifies exclusively a freeman in the military retinue of the king or other seignior, is used in the Salic and Alemannic laws for *persons in a state of servitude;* and in the former code the Weregeld of the Vassus is only thirty solidi.[1]

The latter meaning of the term generally prevailed in Merovingian times, although two or three isolated and doubtful passages have been brought forward in which it seems to be used of a dependent freeman.[2] As soon, of course, as it came into frequent use to denote the more honourable relation, the original meaning became obsolete.

A corresponding change may be observed in the acceptation of the word *seignior* (senior), which is used by Gregory of Tours to denote any superior in his relation to those under his authority. Thus the king is called

[1] Vassus and Vassallus are synonymes (from the diminutive Vasaletus is derived the French word *Valet*). *Lex Salica*, pact. xxxv. (ed. Johan. Merkel; Berlin, 1850): "Si quis *Vassum* ad ministerium (quod est horogauo, puella ad ministerium) . . . . furaverit aut occiderit cui fuerit adprobatum 1200 denarios, qui faciunt solidos 30, culpabilis judicetur." Roth, p. 368. Lex Aleman. 79. 3. Mon. Germ.

[2] Roth, p. 369.

the *Senior* of his subjects, the count of his *pagenses*, the bishop and abbot of their inferior clergy; and even the chief of a band of murderers receives the same name. But in the eighth century it begins to be used of the king and other powerful men solely in their relation to their dependent *homines*.[1]

A model was presented to the Franks, as we have seen, for the formation of private retinues, by the great landed proprietors of Gaul, in which country, as well as in North Britain and other Celtic lands, the institutions of clans had long existed. A natural impulse was also given to the development of the seigniorship by the insecurity of life and property in those unsettled times, when the rich were continually called upon to retain by force what they had unlawfully acquired, and the poor to seek refuge in servitude from the perpetual injuries to which their weakness was exposed. The right of collecting homines or dependent vassals was not confined to any order of nobility, since no such order existed, nor to any other privileged class of men. But though the right in this case was only limited by the power, the number of seigniors was restricted by the very great expense which necessarily attended the maintenance of homines. The greatest seignior was of course the king himself, who had large territorial possessions in every part of the kingdom. The *Vassi Dominici*, as his dependants were called in

1 Marculf. i. 7., ii. 1. Greg. Tur. vi. 21., viii. 21., iv., 27., v. 49., vi. 11, 24. Vid. Roth, p. 371.

Carlovingian times, answered to the Anstrustiones mentioned in the Salic law, as these to the Comites "in pace decus in bello præsidium" of still earlier times. They stood in the closest personal relation to the king, to whom they resigned for ever all their rights as freemen and citizens, in return for free maintenance, the royal favour and protection, and the numerous advantages which their position naturally brought with it. The oath by which they bound themselves, on entering into this relation, was either different in kind to that which every subject was called upon to take, or if the same, acquired additional solemnity by being made to the king in person, between whose hands the royal vassal placed his own.

The connexion between other seigniors and their vassals was precisely of the same nature. Every dependent freeman swore allegiance and fidelity to his superior, and bound himself to a life-long service, from which there were no means of escaping afterwards. So strict was the bond thus formed, and so effectually did the seigniors of Carlovingian times assist each other in maintaining their authority, that to receive or harbour a fugitive vassal was forbidden by the law—which even required that he should be sent back to his seignior for punishment.

But besides the Vassi, whose relation to their seignior was simply a personal one, there was another class, which in Carlovingian times had also fallen into a state of hereditary servitude. These were originally free settlers, who, having no property of

their own, occupied the lands of others on certain conditions. As soon as the land began to accumulate in the hands of a few, it became customary for the poorer freemen to settle on the royal domains, the territory of the Church, and of the great lay proprietors, where they received portions called Mansi, on condition of paying a fixed rent in kind.[1] This natural relation between landlord and tenant existed early in the sixth and seventh centuries, but was at that time free from the servile character into which it subsequently degenerated. Such settlers were originally at liberty to put an end to the connexion that had been formed by simply giving up the land; they contracted no personal or perpetual obligations like the Vassus, but retained all their inherent rights as citizens and freemen. Mansi, or farms of this kind, were also held by Liti and Servi on a very different tenure, and we find different properties distinguished as *Mansi ingenuiles*, *Mansi lidiles*, *Mansi serviles*. And though in later times these terms were used quite irrespectively of the rank of the holder, yet they imply that such a distinction *had* existed. The advantage on the side of the free tenant or ingenuus consisted, not only in the limitation of his rent, and in the less irksome nature of the aids and services required of him, but more particularly *in the terminable nature of his agreement, and his right of free migration from place to place.* In the eighth century, however, we see that in his case also the personal relation of life-long dependence has grown

[1] Roth, p. 375. et seq.

up, and that he has been pressed down almost to a level with the *litus*. He has lost the power of migration, and has begun to perform services for his landlord which had formerly been considered incompatible with freedom. At a still later period, when the number of independent freemen had become very small, the last privilege which they possessed, of having their rent in kind fixed at a maximum, was extended both to liti and servi; and thus almost all distinction between these three classes was lost, and the free settlers were absorbed into the class of serfs.

In the time of Carl Martel then, the retinue of the seigniors was composed of the vassals whose character we have explained, and the freemen who held portions of their land at a rent in kind. They were both comprehended under the general term *homines*, of whom the vassi came to be considered the superior class. The duties of the vassi are not easily definable, but they were chiefly military in their nature, and such as were not deemed unbecoming of freemen; while the military services which all freemen owed the king were rarely claimed more than once a year, when the vassals were required to be in readiness to march at any time and in any direction.

The very principle of the seigniorship is incompatible, not only with public freedom, but with order and good government. When any considerable portion of the inhabitants of a country owe a closer allegiance to some other human authority, whether spiritual or temporal, than to the national government, the workings of the machine of state must

be impeded and irregular. Every seigniorship, every ecclesiastical immunity throughout the land, was a stumbling-block in the path of law and justice, a stronghold for all those who desired to evade their duties to their country. They were fraught with the greatest dangers to the power of the crown, the administration of justice, and the constitution of the army.

The military system of the Franks, as we have seen, was founded on the oath of fidelity to the king, the universal obligation of the freeman to serve him gratuitously in war, at the summons and generally under the command of the court of the *gau* or *pagus*. The working of this system was first seriously impeded by the immense accumulation of land in the hands of the clergy, to whom, in very many cases, *immunities* (exemptions from the usual burdens and obligations attaching to landed property) had been granted by pious but short-sighted donors.

The immunities of the Church were in a great measure closed against the military ban of the count and the sentence of the judge, who could only act indirectly and imperfectly through the advocate of the bishop or abbot.[1] While the property of the Church had been of moderate extent, the inconvenience felt was comparatively slight; but the excessive liberality of the Merovingians not unfrequently excluded the count and his authority from nearly half his gau.

The same inconvenience was felt, though in a less

[1] Roth, p. 354.

degree, in the case of lay proprietors, who gathered large numbers of homines about them. The very liability to gratuitous military service which had once been their pride and pleasure, drove the impoverished freemen into a state of vassalage: both because they found it easier and safer to neglect the ban, when under the protection of a powerful chief; and because, if compelled to serve, the expense of their equipment and maintenance fell in part upon the seignior. The terrible results of the development of these *imperia in imperio*, favoured as it was by the imbecility of the later Merovingians, are witnessed in every page of contemporary annals. The civil and military constitution of the country was destroyed, and general government existed but in name. The country was filled with a crowd of petty tyrants, ecclesiastical and temporal, who, while they oppressed their vassals, set them an example of disobedience to the law, and treason to the king. Acknowledging no right but that of the stronger, they carried on perpetual feuds with one another; or, if they united for a time, it was generally in opposition to the liberties of the people, or the authority of the government. In the period which immediately preceded the rise of Carl Martel to supreme authority, we find the prototype of that state of things which existed in England, under Stephen and Matilda, when the law, if it interfered at all, had to appear as one among a thousand struggling powers. Happily for the Frankish empire, when it seemed on the point of dissolution, there were giants in the land, powerful enough to curb for a time

this hydraheaded tyranny, and sufficiently free from superstition not to shrink from mulcting the Church of a portion of its corrupting wealth. The transition from the confusion and anarchy of the latter part of the seventh century, to something like law and order, and a central government capable of defending both, was made by Carl Martel, one of the greatest heroes of the middle ages. His indomitable energy and military genius enabled him to subdue all who opposed him in arms; and he then applied himself to the task of reconstructing the shattered fabric of the state, from such materials as he found at hand.

To a warrior and a conqueror as he was, and was obliged to be, it was a matter of necessity to have a good supply of soldiers; his first object, therefore, was to get at those who had hitherto in various ways evaded their military duties. The seigniorship and the immunities were facts with which the old military constitution was incompatible. They could not be destroyed, for they had already taken deep root in the social system; they must therefore be acknowledged and legalised, but placed under superintendence and brought into subservience to the wants and purposes of the state. From the beginning of the eighth century, the obligation to perform military service was extended to bishops and abbots, who were expected to appear in the field at the head of all those of their homines who were amenable to the general war-ban; that is, of course, all the freemen who lived upon their territory, or attached themselves to their person. The lay seigniors too, since they had in a great measure

usurped the functions of the counts, were compelled to undertake his responsibilities together with his rights and powers, and to answer for the appearance of all the freemen among their vassals.

Like the counts, they were subjected to penalties for leaving any of their homines behind, and made responsible for the state of their equipments, and for their behaviour in the field. The homines of the seigniors had many advantages over the free pagenses, which continually tended to swell the ranks of the former. The seignior was bound by custom, as well as interest and inclination, to pay a part of the expenses of his followers, who derived besides much mutual aid from this close connexion with one another.[1]

A right understanding of the manner in which the seigniorship attained its vast importance will enable us to gain a correct view of the nature and object of the *beneficia*, with which it afterwards became inseparably connected. The form which society had assumed during the seventh century was briefly this: Throughout the length and breadth of the land, the seigniors or liege lords had gathered round them the strength and resources of the whole nation, and had attained to a state of semi-independence. They stood

[1] The duty of Wacha, or keeping guard, and of defending the borders of the empire, was also gratuitous; but borderers, in consideration of the more frequent calls upon them, were exempted from the general ban. The *publicæ functiones*, as the building of bridges, roads, palaces, &c., were also gratuitously performed; nor were the free homines of a seignior in any way exempted by law from these general services.

on the once level plain of German freedom like the massive but isolated pillars of a ruined temple, supporting nothing but themselves, and unconnected with each other. They were too strong to be thrown down, but they might perhaps be brought into harmonious relation, and be made to sustain the vast fabric of the state. It needed all the energy and all the wisdom of a Carl Martel to effect this object. He performed by no means the most difficult part of his task, when he struck down the rebellious and tamed the haughty into submission. He knew that no strong government can be founded on force alone. It was necessary to bind the seigniors to the throne by their own interests; to devise some plan by which zeal and devotion might be rewarded without too great a sacrifice; by which disloyalty, and even a want of ready obedience, might be punished without a continual recourse to arms. To supply this desideratum was the main object of the beneficia or non-hereditary grants of land.

The common opinion respecting these is well known, and has already been referred to. According to Eichhorn, Savigny, and others, the whole of Gaul was divided into military fiefs on its subjugation by Clovis, and the *beneficial*, we might almost say the *feudal* system, appeared in its full development in the sixth century.[1] Others derive the beneficia of Carlovin-

[1] Eichhorn thinks by the wars of Carl Martel and Pepin, the *Mannitio* or summoning of volunteers was changed into *Bannitio*, a compulsory levy. In the Ripuarian laws, the power of the ban was given to the king in the 7th century. Vid. *Roth*, pp. 199.,

gian times from the *beneficia militaria* of the Romans, and suppose that the lands which were first held at will, were subsequently granted for life, and ultimately in hereditary possession. Guizot thinks that all three tenures existed together.

The Frankish kings from Clovis downwards possessed large landed estates in every part of the empire which bore the name of *fiscus*, and from which they were accustomed to reward their followers. Under the Merovingians the grants of fiscal land appear to have been almost exclusively free and unconditional gifts[1], nor is there any mention of beneficia, in the Carlovingian sense of the word, in the whole history of Gregory. But when, as we have shown, it became a question of existence to the government to secure the dependence of the seigniors, the end in view could not be answered by hereditary grants. To have enriched the seigniors in this manner from the fiscus, would but have weakened the crown at the expense of its unruly subjects, and added fuel to the fire which was preying on the vitals of the state. Recourse was therefore had to a new species of endowment by *non-hereditary grants*, not, as some suppose, revocable at will, but subject to forfeiture for

"Montesquieu regards the beneficia as crown lands (granted to the *Leudes*), which were originally held at will, but through various abuses had *become* hereditary; so that Carl Martel was obliged to found a new set of beneficia—the Carlovingian."

[1] Whether single cases occur of such temporary and revocable grants, analogous to the *precariæ* and similar properties held of the Church, we cannot stop to inquire.

treason or disloyalty, and in all cases *terminable at the death of the grantor.*

These were the beneficia of the Carlovingians, which naturally became a great object of rivalry and ambition to the seigniors, as affording the means of increasing the number of their homines. The beneficia attached some by their hopes, and others by their fears, and taught all to look at the crown as the fountain of profit as well as honour. The holders of beneficia from the crown were not identical with the royal vassals, or vassi dominici, though the same persons frequently stood in both relations to the king, and the two classes were gradually merged in one another. The relation of vassal to his lord was entirely personal, and there were *vassi* who had no *beneficia*, just as there were *beneficiaries* who were not *vassals*.[1] Yet it was natural that the king should seek those as vassals whose aid he could depend upon in war, and that he should wish to strengthen their bands and increase their personal dignity, by bestowing beneficia upon them. And thus the vassi dominici became in the course of time the largest holders of beneficia. The beneficiaries, on the other hand, though they were not necessarily vassals, were obliged to seek in person the renewal of their grants from every fresh successor to the crown. The opportunity therefore was presented, and eagerly seized, of gradually bringing the holders of beneficia into a peculiarly close relation of dependence and allegiance to the sovereign. And thus these different classes ap-

[1] Roth, p. 429.

proached each other so nearly that the distinction was eventually lost sight of.

Though it is evident that the funds employed by Government to conciliate and reward devotion would go much further on the system of beneficia than of hereditary grants, yet they did in fact fall short of the exigencies of the state; and it was this deficiency of means which impelled Carl Martel and his son Pepin to take extraordinary measures in regard to the Church. The object and effect of the most famous of these — the Secularisation — have been spoken of above (p. 302.); but its great importance will perhaps excuse a further mention of it, in this connexion.

We have seen how the matchless vigour, wise counsels, and good fortune of the Carlovingians, enabled them to tame the unruly spirit of the great lay seigniors, and to yoke them to the car of state. They had a still more difficult task before them, to diminish the wealth, to curb the excesses, and humble the pride of the ecclesiastical dignitaries of the empire. In reading the history of the later Merovingians, we are struck with astonishment at seeing how prominent a part is taken by prelates of the Church, in the most disgraceful intrigues and murderous feuds of that blood-stained age. When not restrained by religious considerations, a simple priest could be factious, licentious, and cruel, with far greater safety than the mightiest layman. Even in the age of Chilperic and Fredegunda, the rights and privileges of the Church were generally respected, and the sacred

office and separate jurisdiction of its ministers too often procured for them impunity in crime. The bishops and abbots therefore, whose splendid revenues and numerous vassals placed them on a level with the proudest seigniors, were far more difficult to deal with than the most wealthy and turbulent of the laity. To this was added that the discipline of the Gallican clergy had fallen into complete disorder. Their distance from the seat of the Roman pontiff, and the absence of all common action and ready communication among themselves, rendered them independent of all spiritual authority, and even of that mutual surveillance which sometimes supplies its place. Both history and experience have taught us that no religious community, however favourable the circumstances of the age in which it exists, can be long preserved from corruption without the constant watchfulness and interference of some strong authority. It can cause us little surprise therefore, in a period so full of influences hostile to the development of the Christian life, to find that many of the prelates of the Church had nothing of the priest or the Christian about them, but the name; and were guilty of the most terrible and shameful crimes which disgrace humanity.

To restore the internal discipline and morality of the Frankish Church was the object of Wilfrid (Boniface) the Englishman's glorious mission. The ruder task of bringing it into some degree of subservience to the state was performed by Carl Martel and King Pepin. Besides the expedient already mentioned of

placing the bishops and abbots on the footing of lay seigniors, and requiring them to bring their homines into the field, these rulers took advantage of the disorganised state of the hierarchy, to bestow the great prizes in the Church on the most faithful of their servants, without much regard to mental or spiritual fitness. This had been done before the time of Carl Martel, but with him it became the rule to give away sees and benefices to those who would turn them to secular and military purposes. What was attempted by our Henries, in the case of Thomas-à-Becket and Wolsey, was here carried out on a more extensive scale. The nephew of Carl Martel, Hugo, held at the same time the bishoprics of Paris, Rouen, and Bayeux. Pope Gregory II. complains, in a letter to Vigilius of Arles[1], that laymen, solely with a view to temporal honours, assumed the tonsure on the death of bishops, and suddenly became priests. "In the time of Prince Carl (Martel)," says Hincmar, "in the German, Belgian, and Gallic provinces, the Christian religion was almost entirely abolished, so that bishops being left only in a few places, the bishoprics were granted to laymen." He then goes on to speak of "a certain Milo, a priest *by his tonsure*, but in his morals, habits, and actions an irreligious layman, who occupied the sees of Rheims and Trèves at the same time, and destroyed them for the space of many years, so that many of the Eastern Franks worshipped idols and remained unbaptized."[2] The influence of Carl

[1] Bouquet, iv. p. 13.

[2] Hincmari Opera ii. p. 731. (ad Episcop. de jure Metropolitan,

Martel upon the Church was only external and political. He was no religious reformer, and though he aided Boniface in his efforts to bring the Frankish clergy under the stricter discipline at Rome, his objects were chiefly secular; he was not without reverence for religion and its ministers, but he regarded the Church chiefly as a great military chest, from which his wars might be most readily supplied.[1]

The famous Act of the Secularisation, however, is erroneously attributed to Carl Martel, though no doubt the arbitrary manner in which he infringed upon the privileges of the Church, and perverted its revenues, prepared the way for a more wholesale spoliation. That important event in the history of the Frankish Church took place in the middle of the eighth century, and under the auspices of Carloman and Pepin. It stands in close connexion with the revival of discipline and organisation among the clergy which those princes aided Boniface to bring about. The pressing wants which Carl Martel had supplied, in a manner so injurious to the best interests of the Church, were experienced in a still greater degree by Carloman and Pepin, and it was

xliv. c. xx.). Conf. Chron. Viridunense (written 1115 A.D.), ap. Boug. iii. p. 364.; and Epist. Greg. II. ad Episcop. (ap. Sirmond. Concil. Gall. tom. i. p. 513.) *Bonif. Epist.* 51. (ad Zachar.): "Modo autem maxima ex parte per civitates episcopales sedes traditæ sunt laicis cupidis ad possidendum vel adulteratis Clericis, scortatoribus, et publicanis seculariter ad perfruendum."

[1] *Gieseler*, i. 746. De majoribus domus regiæ (ap. Du Chesne, Hist. Franc. Script. tom. ii. p. 2.): "Carolus . . . res Ecclesiarum propter assiduitatem bellorum laicis tradidit."

equally necessary for them to employ the wealth of the Church in propping the fabric of the State. But the influence of Boniface and the Bishop of Rome induced them to seek their ends in a less rude and violent though equally effective manner. They could no longer suddenly change a warlike layman into a priest, by shaving the top of his head and investing him with wealthy benefices, and they therefore used the influence and mediation of Boniface to obtain from the clergy a voluntary resignation of a large portion of their revenues. The matter was brought before the Council of Lestines (A. D. 743), and it was then that the Secularisation may be said to have been consummated. In appearance it was a still greater inroad upon the ecclesiastical rights than any which even Carl Martel had allowed himself; but in fact it was a change for the better, since it tended to rid the Church of a class of ignorant and licentious bishops, who had hitherto corrupted and disgraced it. The terms in which this voluntary surrender was made are as follows:—"Statuimus quoque, cum consilio servorum Dei et populi Christiani, propter imminentia bella et persecutiones cæterarum gentium, quæ in circuitu nostro sunt, ut sub precario et censu aliquam partem ecclesialis pecuniæ (i. e. property) in adjutorum exercitus nostri, cum indulgentia Dei aliquanto tempore retineamus ea conditione ut annis singulis de unaquaque casata solidus, i. e. XII. denarii ad ecclesiam vel monasterium reddantur; eo modo ut si moriatur ille cui pecunia commodata fuit, Ecclesia cum propria pecunia revestita sit.

Et iterum, si necessitas cogat, aut Princeps jubeat precarium renovetur et rescribatur novum."[1]

And thus were both lay and clerical seigniors brought into subjection for a time by the vigour of the extraordinary men who founded the second Frankish dynasty. Yet this policy only aimed at the control and guidance of the irregular and impetuous forces which existed around them, and not at their annihilation. The Carlovingians decidedly favoured the seigniorship, and themselves created the *beneficial system;* and they used them both to carry out their schemes of conquest and empire. But a machine which proved so powerful in the hands of Carl Martel and his successors, could only be worked by hands like theirs, as was clearly seen when the sword of these mighty warriors passed into the hands of the feeble son of Charlemagne.

The difficulty with which even these three heroes maintained the supremacy of the crown, is clearly seen in the annals of their reigns. The vassi dominici, though curbed for the time, continually increased in strength, and gradually developed into a feudal aristocracy of birth. That such a class of hereditary nobility had not hitherto existed, as is generally maintained, might be satisfactorily proved from the Salic law alone. But the arguments derived from it are confirmed by the History of Gregory of Tours, which contains no trace of a Frankish nobility. When a long-haired Merovingian is shorn

[1] Sirmond. Conc. Gall. i. p. 540.

of his royal locks, he is said to have been reduced to the rank of a plebeian.[1] When the royal murderers, Childebert I. and Clotaire, are consulting upon the fate of their nephews, they debate whether "they should cut their hair and cause them to be regarded like the rest of *the plebs*." (Utrum incisa cæsarie ut *reliqua Plebs* habèantur.) When the historian is speaking of a powerful or distinguished Frank, it is always as a *wealthy* man, or as filling an important office; never as a man of noble lineage or hereditary honours.[2] That the omission of all reference to a nobility of birth among the Franks is not accidental, is evident from the fact that where hereditary distinctions did exist, as among the Gallo-Romans, they are always noticed.[3]

Yet though we conceive that nothing in mediæval history is more certain than that the seigniors, under the Carlovingian mayors, were *not* an order of nobility in the proper sense, yet it required but a few changes and a little time, to make them the most powerful hereditary aristocracy that the world ever saw. The very means which Carl Martel took to subject them, served in the sequel to increase their power, and to insure them a victory over the first ordinary occupant of the throne. There is a natural tendency—scarcely to be overcome even in the freest states—in wealth and honours to become hereditary. And

[1] Greg. iii. 18.

[2] Greg. viii. 29. et passim.

[3] In the Formula of Marculf, it is admission into the king's retinue which is made the ground of increased weregeld.

whatever the theory, and even the practice of such a man as Carl Martel might be, respecting the beneficia, it was inevitable that the grants of land which had been made to the father would in ordinary times, in the great majority of cases, be renewed in favour of the son. This would happen even under fearless and powerful monarchs; but how much more so under those whose chief object was to avoid giving offence; and who knew that by depriving a single vassal of his benefice, or even disappointing the hopes of an expectant heir, they would draw upon themselves the wrath and enmity of all in a like position! The process by which the beneficia, and even the office of count, became hereditary was so gradual, that it is impossible to assign any particular date to this important change; but it was not until after this change had been completed that the new and mighty order of nobility took its rise, which has played so conspicuous, so brilliant, and, in some countries, so glorious a part in the succeeding history of Europe.

CHAP. X.

SALIC LAW.[1]

ALL the information which Tacitus has given us concerning the laws of the ancient Germans is contained in a few short sentences; but brief as they are, we find in them the fundamental principles of their subsequent legislation, and the broad and unmistakable characteristics of the whole Teutonic race. If we compare the scanty notices of the great historian with the later codes of different tribes, and more particularly with those of the Salian and Ripuarian Franks, we find so great a similarity between them, not only in their general spirit, but in some of the most striking of their provisions, that they serve to verify and illustrate each other.

The well known Salic law — one of the most remarkable monuments of antiquity — has been handed down to us in a barbarous and corrupted latinity; but whether it was originally composed in the Latin language is still a subject of debate among antiquarians. The controversy has originated in the very

[1] We have made use of the excellent edition of Joh. Merkel, Lex Salica; Berlin, 1850.

singular fact that the oldest editions of the code contain a considerable number of words of unknown import, interspersed through the Latin text, but having no apparent connexion with the sense.[1] These words, known under the name of the *Malberg Gloss*, are considered by some writers to belong to the ancient Celtic language[2]; while Jacob Grimm declares them to be remnants of the German dialect in which the laws were originally composed, and which gradually made way for the bastard Latin of Merovingian times. In his eyes they are the only "planks" and "splinters" that have been washed on shore from the shipwreck of the old Frankish tongue, and on that account worthy of the notice both of the lawyer and the philologian.[3]

Without entering any further into this question, on which Leo on the one side, and Grimm on the other, have argued with almost equal learning and vehemence, we may remark upon the antecedent improbability of a theory which maintains that German laws brought by Germans from the German forests should contain the remnants of a *Celtic* dialect. The theory of Grimm, on the other hand, has the merit of being in harmony with the Frankish history; and is further recommended by the striking results of his later researches.

[1] The first edition of this ancient code is that of Herold, who procured it from the library of Fulda, and caused it to be printed with the so-called Malberg Gloss.

[2] Leo "Die Malb. Glosse." (Halle, 1842.)

[3] Grimm's Vorrede über die Malbergische Glosse, in Johannes Merkel's Lex Salica.

The exact date of the composition and promulgation of the Salic law is very uncertain, but the great antiquity of the oldest part of it is abundantly attested both by external and internal evidence. The foundation of the whole code is found in the first sixty-five chapters. From the sixty-sixth to the seventy-sixth we have the additions made by Clovis in the beginning of the sixth century, which are also accompanied by the Malberg Gloss. The chapters from the seventy-seventh to the hundred and fifth, are the work of Chilperic II., Clotaire II., and other Merovingian kings, and are without the gloss. Besides the code itself we have 357 fragments, collected under the head of *Novellæ*, which consist almost entirely of additions and modifications of the above mentioned laws; forty of the other Novellæ are taken from Alaric's *Breviarium*, and are therefore later than the year 506 A.D., and 146 contain a reference to the Christian Church and the holy reliques. Attached to some of the older MSS., are several longer and shorter *Epilogues* in which some account of the collection and promulgation of the laws is attempted to be given. One of these is as follows: "*Hoc sunt qui lege Salica tractaverunt Wisogast, Widegast, Arogast, Bodegast, Salegast, Wisowando, in Bodachæm et in Salachæ.* The *Prologues* of other MSS. mention the same persons and the same places of abode. "*Extiterunt igitur inter eos electi de pluribus viri quatuor his nominibus Wisogastus, Arogastus, Salegastus, et Widogastus que (ultra Renum) sunt in Bodochem et*

Salachem, et Widochem."[1] The localities here mentioned as the birthplaces of the Salic code are unknown, but we find in the laws themselves some slight indications of the geographical position of the Franks at the period referred to. In pact. xlvii. of the law, the *Sylva Carbonaria*[2] and the Ligere (the Ley or Ly), a small river in Belgium, which empties itself into the Scheldt, near Ghent, are spoken of as the proper boundaries of the Salic land. As, however, it seems to be implied in the same chapter that the Salic law was in force in the country on the other side of these boundaries, we are inclined to think that a period is here referred to when Cambrai, and the country as far as the Somme, had been conquered, but not thoroughly incorporated with the ancient Salian lands. These later conquests, as we have seen, were made by Clodio. It is probable, therefore, that the villages from which the above-named lawgivers were chosen, lay within the narrow territory above defined. And this supposition agrees particularly well with the nature of the laws themselves, adapted, as they are, for the use of a small community. Everything which we read in the original code is in harmony with the state of things existing in the earlier

[1] At the end of the Leyden Codex there is a similar notice: "Hæc sunt nomina eorum qui fecerunt legem Salicæ, Visuast, Saleanats, Vicats; qui vero manserunt in lege in budice do micio fristratio."

[2] Waitz (D. alte R. d. Sal. Frank. p. 59.) supposes this forest (Kohlenwald) to have extended from the R. Sambre, near Thuin, in a NW. direction towards the Scheldt.

part of the fifth century (422 A.D.), when the Frankish territory was small, and its inhabitants comparatively few and poor; and when, too, though they had already come into contact with the Romans, they had adopted nothing of their religion, laws, or manners. The singular agreement between the Salic code and some passages in the *Germania* of Tacitus, tends to confirm us in this opinion, and renders it extremely improbable that so vast a change in the circumstances of the Frankish people as was brought about by the subjugation of Gaul should have intervened between the time of which Tacitus speaks and that of the Salian legislation. We plainly perceive that the interval, whether shorter or longer, had effected but little change in the condition and relations of the people. Nor is the agreement above referred to more remarkable for what is said, than for what is omitted. Neither the treatise of Tacitus nor the Salian code contain much constitutional law, nor in fact anything which indicates close *political* relations, or an organised system of government. Their main and almost sole object appears to be, to determine and uphold the *personal* rights of the freeborn inhabitants of the country. Protection for the life and limbs, the property and honour of the *ingenuus*, is sum and substance of the whole.

But though there is but little in the ancient German laws of what we call the State, or even of extended social life, there are perpetual references to the existence of a very close relation between the

members of a *domus*, or, in the widest sense, *family* [1]; which corresponded in a great measure to the *gens* of the early Romans. Originally, no doubt, the members of these houses were all connected, though distantly, by blood or marriage; but in later times actual blood-relationship was not an indispensable prerequisite for admission. Into such a family every freeman entered at his birth as a partner in its privileges and responsibilities. The looser their connexion, — the less frequent their intercourse with the rest of the world,— the closer were the ties which bound the members of these clans together. And hence it is that some of the provisions of the Salic code, even where they only regard single persons, bear rather the character of international than of private law. No man could either sin or suffer as an individual; by every offence which he committed, he rendered himself and his *gentiles* responsible to all the members of another similar corporation. The union of several of these houses or families (which held a certain portion of land in common) formed the larger community to whose settlements Tacitus gives the name of *pagus* [2] (in the more confined sense of the word), and the Salic law that of *villa*. In the fifth century, owing to the increasing value of land, *the houses* had become exclusive corporations, into which admission could not be gained if a single member of them ob-

[1] *Tac. Germ.* xxi.: "Luitur enim etiam homicidium certo armentorum ac pecorum numero, recipitque satisfactionem *universa domus*."

[2] Pagus is also used by Latin writers for *gau* or *canton*.

jected. Yet the Præceptum of the king, or undisturbed possession of a portion of the common land for twelve months, appears to have been sufficient to establish the right.[1]

The obligations which rested upon a member of these corporations, seem at times to have outweighed the advantages to be derived from them, and to have become so onerous that it was necessary to provide a means of escaping from them. The Salic law actually contains a formula by which any man might free himself from all connexion with his *parentilla*.[2]

The social distinctions indicated in this code have been noticed in another portion of this work; but for the sake of perspicuity it will be necessary briefly to refer to them again. The high honour paid to the king, even in the very ancient period which gave birth to these laws, appears from the fact that all who stood in any near relation to him were under the peculiar protection of the law.

Without the intervention of any order of nobility, *of which there is not a single trace throughout the code*, we descend at once from the king to the freeman (*Francus ingenuus*, *homo ingenuus*, *baro ingenuus*), placed on an equality with whom we find "the German who lived according to the Salic law." (*Barbarus qui lege Salica vivit.*) Next in order to the ingenuus is the *litus*, who was no doubt identical with the serf whom Tacitus represents as cultivating

[1] Vid. Lex Sal. xlv. De migrantibus.

[2] Lex Sal. lx. De eum qui se de *parentilla* tollere vult.

the soil, and paying a rent in kind to his lord.[1] That the litus was not free is evident from the mention of his master and the fact that he could be sold[2]; though we find a weregeld set upon his life equal to that of the free Roman, it was probably paid to the person whose property he was. We see, however, that the Liti had somewhat improved their condition in the interval between the first and fifth centuries; for by the laws of the Franks they were allowed to enter into binding legal engagements, and to appear before the public tribunals. On the same footing with respect to weregeld were the Pueri Regis[3], whose position was certainly one of servitude, but cannot be accurately defined; and the liberti or freedmen, whose condition in the time of Tacitus was very little raised above that of the slave.[4]

In the Romance population the Salic law distinguishes two classes — the *Possessor Romanus*, and the *Tributarius Romanus*. The meaning of these terms is very uncertain; the former is generally supposed to denote one of the higher class of landed proprietors, who retained their possessions after the Frankish conquest; and the latter, one of the great mass of common freemen, who were liable to a poll tax.[5] Roth

[1] Tac. Germ. xxvi. Waitz differs from this view. Waitz, Das alte Recht der Salischen Franken.

[2] Lex. Sal. xxxv. Litum alienum. Ibid. xxvi. 1., xxxv. 4.

[3] They may have been slaves whose position was raised by their being about the court, and in personal attendance on the king. Vid. L. Sal. lxxviii.

[4] Tac. Germ. xxv.

[5] Roth, 83, 84.

endeavours with considerable success to show that the term possessor was used of every Roman who had the right to possess land; while the tributarius was identical with the Roman colonus, and held a sort of middle place between the freeman and slave.

Such are the only hereditary distinctions of which the Salic law takes cognisance. We meet, however, with several titles denoting *temporary* rank, derived from offices political and judicial, or from a position about the person of the king.

Among these the Antrustiones, who were in constant attendance upon the king, and formed his court, played a conspicuous part. In the oldest portion of the Salic law the word Antrustio does not occur, but the same persons are designated by the words *qui in truste dominica*. Romans who held the same position were called *Convivæ Regis*. The Antrustiones and Convivæ Regis are the predecessors of the Vassi Dominici of later times, and like these were bound to the king by an especial oath of personal and perpetual service. They formed part, as it were, of the king's family, and were expected to reside in the palace, where they superintended the various departments of the royal household.[1]

Though generally employed in some particular office at court, the nature of their relation to the king rendered it incumbent upon them to hold themselves in readiness for any task which their royal master might please to impose upon them. So far

[1] Waitz, Verfass. Gesch. ii. 394. 396. No. i. Roth, p. 125. 127.

from their forming a separate hereditary order of Frankish nobles, however, as Savigny and others have supposed, it is more than probable that they were sometimes chosen, not only from the Roman Possessores, but even from the Liti and Pueri Regis.[1] The higher weregeld (or *leodis*) which was set upon their lives, was not a mark of higher birth, but arose simply from the general principle that every person or thing, in the service or possession of the king, was to be placed under the more especial protection of the law. If the Antrustio were a Frankish ingenuus, his leodis was triple that of the other Frankish freemen; if a possessor, a litus, or a puer regis, then triple that of any other member of the class from which he was chosen.

The highest official dignitary of which the Salic law makes mention, is the *Grafio* (Graf, Count), who was appointed by the king, and therefore protected by a triple leodis. His authority and jurisdiction extended over a district answering to the gau (canton) of later times, in which he acted as the representative of the king, and was civil and military governor of the people. The chief person in the *Centenæ* (hundreds) into which we have supposed the gau to be divided, is called by the twofold name of *Thunginus* and *Centenarius*.[2] This magis-

[1] Roth, p. 119, 120.

[2] *Lex Aleman.* tit. 36.: "Conventus autem secundum consuetudinem antiquam fiat in omni centena coram comite aut suo misso et coram centenario ipsum placitum fiat."

trate appears to have been elected by the community at large, and presided over the Mallus (court of law), which was held in the open air at certain stated periods for the administration of justice.[1] The place of meeting was called the *Malloberg*. On such occasions, the grafio does not appear to have taken any part in the proceedings, but to have held a position analogous to our county sheriffs in the Courts of Assizes, and simply to have carried out the judgment of the court.[2] The actual judges were a certain number of freemen[3] chosen from the people, and called for the time being *Rachineburgii*, who, under the presidency of the *Thunginus*, acted the part of a college of judges or jury. A regular summons preceded every trial, which when made by the plaintiff is called *mannire*, and when made by the grafio, *bannire*. "He who summons another," runs the law, "should go to his house with his witnesses; and if he be not at home, then he (the plaintiff) may call his (defendant's) wife or one of his family, and make known to them that he is summoned."[4] In other cases the grafio himself went with seven Rachineburgii to the house of the defendant, to demand restitution or satisfaction, or to comply in some way or other with the decree of the court.[5]

[1] Lex Sal. lx. In mallo ante Thunginum.

[2] Lex Sal. li. De ando meto.

[3] Perhaps seven. *Lex Sal.* l. De fides factas: "Tunc Grafio collegat septem Rachineburgius [idoneos] et sic cum ipsis ad casa illius qui fidem fecit," etc.

[4] Lex Sal. i. De mannire.

[5] Lex Sal. l.

The penalty for non-appearance, on receiving a summons, was very severe; and he who contumaciously neglected to fulfil the verdict of the Rachineburgii was summoned to appear before the king within *fourteen nights*.[1] If he still failed to appear, the fact was attested by a certain number of witnesses; this formality having been repeated without effect several times, the delinquent lost the king's protection, his property was confiscated, and all persons, including his own wife (uxor sua proxima), were forbidden to feed him or receive him into their house, under a penalty of fifteen solidi.[2] Besides the Rachineburgii we find another class of persons taking part in the administration of justice, whose character and functions it is almost impossible to define. These are the *Sacebarone*. Their triple leodis, and the fact that they might be chosen either from the Pueri Regis as well as the Ingenui, seem to show that they were appointed by the king; nor is it less evident that their office was one of honour and importance. Waitz appears to think that they were persons learned in the law, who were summoned to assist the deliberations of the Rachineburgii by their superior knowledge.[3] This hypothesis is too vague to be satisfactory; and we are inclined to conjecture, from the fact that the number of Sacebarone present at a Mallum was limited to three, and that

[1] They reckoned nights like all the Germanic tribes. Tac. Germ. xi.

[2] Lex Sal. lvi.

[3] Waitz, Das al. R. d. S. Fr. p. 132.

they are also called *Obgrafiones*[1] (vice-comites or deputy counts), that they were representatives of the graf or count at those tribunals at which he was unable to attend in person.

When we come to examine the penal portion of the Salic code, we find its main feature, in agreement with all ancient German legislation, to be the practice of atoning for every crime, even that of murder, by a fine in money or money's worth. This peculiar sanction of the law was evidently founded on the right of revenge awarded by the German, in common with the Oriental races, to the nearest relative of a murdered man. It was this right which was bought off and satisfied by the leodis or weregeld. What Tacitus says on this point is in strict accordance with the spirit of the Salian code. "The Germans are bound," he says, "to take up the feuds as well as the friendships of their fathers and kindred; but their hostility is not implacable, for even homicide may be atoned for by a certain number of cattle or sheep, and the whole family receives satisfaction."[2] And elsewhere he says, "Those who are convicted of a crime are mulcted of a number of horses or cattle; part of the fine is paid to the king or the State, and part to the injured party, or to his relations."[3]

The whole penal code of the Salian Franks is founded upon the principles here laid down. In this too the right and duty of revenge may be com-

[1] Lex Sal. liv. De grafione occisum.

[2] Tac. Germ. xxi.

[3] Tac. Germ. xii.

muted for a sum of money, varying according to the injury inflicted and the social rank of the sufferer.

The intimacy of the bond by which every man was united to his family (domus in the sense already explained), rendered the members of it, associates both in his guilt, where he was the aggressor, and in his claim to compensation, where he was aggrieved. But it was not compulsory on any one to accept the compensation offered by the law. Every freeman could refuse it, and trust to his own resources to procure for himself a retribution more suited to his taste.[1] In the majority of cases, however, a man would be inclined, or, if not, would be compelled by public opinion, to accept the atonement offered by the law; which was moreover sufficient to satisfy the most vindictive heart. The nominal punishment, indeed, in the case of a freeman was only a fine in money, but the consequences of inability to pay were slavery and even death. The punishment of death was denounced *directly* only against slaves, but the immense amount of the fines inflicted in certain cases must have made it by no means uncommon even among freemen. Where the murderer was an ingenuus, and his whole property

[1] Greg. Tur. vii. 21. King Guntram swears in presence of the *Optimates* to avenge the murder of his brother Chiperic on Eberulf to the ninth generation. "Tunc Rex juravit omnibus optimatibus, quod non modo ipsum (Eberulfum) verum etiam progeniem ejus in nonam generationem deleret." Greg. Tur. vii. 47. Chramnisindus refuses to accept a composition for the murder of his father, Austrigisel, and sought a bloody revenge. Vid. Waitz, Das alte R. der Sal. Franken, p. 186.

was insufficient to pay the fine, he had to declare in the presence of twelve jurors that he had nothing either above or below the earth. He then left his house naked and with nothing but a staff in his hand, and his relations became responsible for him. If any of them could not bear his part, they had to go through the same ceremony as the culprit. Where the latter had no relations he was put up for sale at four successive Malbergs. If the sum offered for him was not sufficient to pay the fine, he was put to death. It seems, however, that in this case his enemy had to play the part of executioner.[1]

Now, when we consider that the leodis of a simple freeman was 200 solidi (which sum was tripled when he was serving in war or was in *truste dominica*), and that the value of a cow (as we learn from a statement in the Ripuarian code, and from the fine exacted for killing that animal) was only *one* sol, we may easily imagine that the cases of non-payment were anything but rare.

When we come to examine the provisions of the laws themselves, we find them such as might be expected from the place and time of their composition. "Necessity," as has well been said, "dictated them, and freedom wrote them down." They bear the stamp of a rude and free people, living by agriculture and the pasturage of cattle; ignorant of the complicated relations of civilised life, and prone to crimes of violence rather than of licentiousness or chicanery. The

[1] *Lex Sal.* Tit. lviii.: "De Chrene cruda."

crimes referred to may be characterised as those which are generally prevalent among the lower classes of an agricultural population. Of the sixty-five chapters of the original Salic laws, nearly a fourth part relates to robbery and theft, including poaching; and a large proportion of the rest to murder, rape, arson, cutting-and-maiming, destruction of property, &c. Besides these we find laws of inheritance and several enactments respecting the commerce of the sexes; with particular reference to unions, illicit or otherwise, between the Ingenui and the Liti and Servi. Not merely the lives, limbs, and goods of the freemen were protected by a fine, but their good name; and the law denounces a heavy punishment against those who should either slander, or in other ways insult, their neighbours.

The leodis for all free Germans, who lived according to the Salic law, was 800 dinarii, or 200 solidi. This was increased to 600 when the murdered person was a *puer crinitus* (a boy under twelve years of age), or a free woman capable of bearing children. The leodis of the latter was increased to 700 in case of actual pregnancy. The unborn child was protected by a leodis of 100 sols. Where a woman was killed together with the unborn child, and the latter happened to be a girl, the fine was 2400 sols![1] The fine for killing a freeman, when he was in military service, or when he had entered into a near and permanent relation to the king, was tripled. Thus the antrustio, the grafio, the sacebarone, if they

[1] Sal. Leg. Tit. lxxv.

were Ingenui, had a permanent leodis of 600 sols; which was also the fine for killing any freeman who was serving in war. If the antrustio, &c., were in military service the fine rose to 1800 sols. The same enormous penalty was enacted when the murderer of an ingenuus had endeavoured to conceal the body by throwing it into a well, or in any other way; or when several persons in company (*in contubernio facto*) fell upon a man in his own house and killed him.[1] When a man was killed by an animal belonging to another person, the owner of the beast was obliged to pay half the legal leodis of the deceased. The penalty for beating a freeborn boy, without the consent of his parents, was 45 sols, *for beating a girl*, 100 sols.[2]

Kidnapping and selling in the case of a freeman was punished equally with murder.[3]

The leodis of the Frankish *letus* was 100 sols, or half that of the ingenuus, and there is good reason for supposing that it was paid not to himself but to his master.[4]

The fine for killing another person's slave was thirty sols[5], and exactly the same punishment was inflicted for stealing him, because he was regarded simply in the light of property.[6] On the same

[1] Lex. Sal. xxxix. [2] Lex. Sal. xlii. [3] Lex Sal. lxviii.

[4] xxvi. "De libertis demissis. Si quis alienum letum extra consilium domini." Vid. xxxv. 3. xxvi. relates to setting free the Lætus.

[5] Lex Sal. xxxv.

[6] Lex. Sal. x. "Si quis servum aut cavallum vel gumentum furaverit . . . sol. 30 cul. pabilis judicetur."

principle the leodis of the slave was greater if he were skilled in any art, because it made him of greater value to his master.[1]

The leodis of the higher class of Romans, the Possessores, was 100 sols; and that of the Pueri Regis, in consequences of their relation to the king, was the same. The fine for slaying the Roman tributarius was only seventy-five sols.[2]

The leodis, as we have said before, was tripled during the time of military service, or the administration of any office under the king.

Other crimes, where the perpetrator was an ingenuus, might also be atoned for by money, and we find in the Salic law a nicely-graduated scale of fines for wounds and other personal injuries. One hundred solidi, a moiety of the weregeld, was paid for depriving a man of an eye, hand, or foot.[3] The thumb and great toe were valued at fifty sols; the second finger, with which they drew the bow, at thirty-five sols. With respect to other acts of violence, the fine varied according to several minute circumstances; as, whether the blow was given with a stick or with closed fist; whether the brain was laid bare; whether certain bones obtruded, and how much; whether blood flowed from the wound on to the ground, &c. &c. The punishment inflicted varied, of course, with the rank of the offender as well as that

[1] Lex. Sal. Novell, 306.

[2] Lex Sal. xli. This seems to have been raised to 100 sols. Vid x Sal. cap. lxxviii.

[3] The *mutilation* of a freedman was held equivalent to murder and punished by a fine of 200 solidi. Lex. Sal. xcv.

of the injured party. If a letus or a slave killed an ingenuus, the homicide himself was given over to the friends of the murdered man as a moiety of the leodis, and the master of the criminal was obliged to pay the other half.[1] If the slave of one man killed the slave of another, the survivor was divided between the two owners. The ingenuus, as we have seen, was not subject to capital or corporal punishment, until every source from which he might claim assistance had been exhausted; he was then put to death, or thrust down into a servile condition. But the law was by no means so considerate towards slaves. Death under various forms, torture, mutilations, and stripes are denounced against them for comparatively light offences. If a slave robbed a freeman to the amount of forty-five sols, he was put to death.[2] If he stole two denarii, he had to pay 120 denarii (three sols) or receive 120 lashes. Where the ingenuus would have been fined fifteen sols, the slave was stretched over a bench (super scammun tensus) and received 120 lashes. If he pleaded not guilty, his master had to produce him on a certain day, and the plaintiff might put him to the torture until he confessed. Even the female slave was subjected to corporal punishment, and in cases where a male slave would have been mutilated, the female must either pay six sols or receive 240 lashes.[3]

[1] Lex Sal. tit. xxxv. [2] Lex Sal. xl.

[3] Tacitus says that Germans were mild to slaves. Roman influence already at work. *Tac. Germ.* xxv.: "Verberare servum

The penalties for theft are generally very high, and bespeak a strong Germanic respect for the rights of property. The fine for stealing a goose was three sols, the price of three cows; and for stealing a single bee from under lock and key, was punished by the incredible sum of forty-five sols![1] He who stole fuel from another's wood was fined three sols; he who stole a net from a river, forty-five sols; and other thefts were punished in proportion.

The love of the Germans for field sports, to which Tacitus refers, is clearly evinced in the Salic law, by the severity of some of its provisions.

The poacher was liable to a fine of forty-five sols for killing a single stag. To steal a hawk from a tree was punished by a fine of three sols, from its perch by fifteen sols; and from under lock and key forty-five sols.

Even the honour and self-respect of the ingenuus were protected in the same manner. No man could insult another by word or act without exposing himself to the penalties of the law. To throw a stone over another man's house for the purpose of insulting him, cost seven and, afterwards fifteen sols.[2] To call

ac vincules et opere coercere, rarum. Occidere solent *non disciplina et severitate* sed impetu et ira ut inimicum, nisi quod impune." Lex Sal. xl. The master, runs this clause, "virgas paratas habere debet, quæ *ad magnitudinem minoris digiti* sint, et scamnum præsto ubi servo ipso tendere debeat." This reminds us of the popular error that a man might beat his wife with a stick as big as his little finger.

[1] Lex Sal. viii., de furtis apium.

[2] Lex Sal. xcix.

an Ingenuus a fox, a hare, or a dirty fellow; or to say that he had thrown away his shield, cost three sols; to call a man a cheat cost fifteen sols; to call him a wizard sixty-two and a half sols. To call a woman a harlot without being able to prove it, fifteen sols; while to call her a witch (*stria*) rendered a man liable to the enormous penalty of 187 sols![1] or very nearly as much as if he had taken the life of a Frankish ingenuus.

We gain a good deal of interesting information from the Salic law, respecting the all important relation between the sexes, from which the peculiarity and superiority of modern civilisation, as compared with that of the ancient world, mainly proceeds.[2] And here too Tacitus and the Salic code are in the strictest unison with each other; and those who know nothing of the latter, *except that it excludes females from the throne*, will be surprised at the tenderness it displays for the rights of women. "The wife," says Tacitus, "does not bring a dowry to the husband, but the husband to the wife,"[3] and the same custom is constantly referred to in the *latter*. This may appear singular to us in an age when the increased demands of luxury, and still more the prevalence of concubinage and prostitution, have rendered marriage comparatively rare, and placed the weaker sex at an unnatural and cruel disadvantage. But apart from conventional usages, we are inclined to sympathise

[1] Lex Sal. lxiv. [2] Lex Sal. xxiii.
[3] Tac. Germ. xviii. Lex Sal. lxxi., lxxii.

with Chremes[1], in the play, when he complains that he has to leave his business, in order to find some one on whom he may bestow his daughter *and* his hardly earned wealth! Yet we are not to suppose that there was any idea of purchase connected with the payment of the sponsalia (the "settlements" in modern phrase) which the bridegroom presented to his bride. The Salic law does not speak of the marriage *solido et denario*, although we find elsewhere the expression *de solido et denario secundum legem Salicam sponsare*[2]; but even where this ceremony was observed, it was simply symbolical, and was not in any way intended to represent the price paid for the bride. A betrothal appears to have preceded the marriage, and as the domus, or family in the wider sense, was increased by the new connexion, it was customary, though not legally necessary, to ask the consent of the kindred of both parties. The engagement to marry took place in the presence of the parents, on either side.[3] Later texts of the Salic code speak of formally conducting the bride in a procession to the house of her husband.

Besides the dowry which was given before the marriage ceremony had been performed, it was customary for the husband to make his wife a

[1] *Terentii Heauton-timoroumenos*, act iv. sc. vii.:

"Quam multa justa injusta fiunt moribus!
Mihi nunc, relictis rebus, inveniendus est
Aliquis, labore inventa mea cui dem bona!"

[2] Vid. Du Cange, Glossar Scrip. mediæ et infim. Latin, sub voce Solidus.

[3] Lex Sal. Novellæ, 357.

present on the morning after the first night.[1] This was called the *morgengabe*, or morning gift, the presenting of which, where no previous ceremony had been observed, constituted a particular kind of connexion called matrimonium morganaticam, or *morganatic marriage*. As the liberality of the husband was apt to be excessive, we find the amount limited by the Langobardian laws to one fourth of the bridegroom's substance.

The marriage of widows, which in earlier times was actually illegal among some of the German tribes[2], was evidently still looked upon with disfavour in the fifth century. According to the 44th pact of the Salic code "*de Reipus*," he who wished to marry a widow could only do so by publicly declaring his intention before the Thunginus at a public Mallus, by making compensation to her relations, and going through a number of formalities calculated to cool the ardor of the suitor. The widow too had to consult her own children by her former husband, and to pay

[1] *Greg. Tur.* ix. 20.: "De civitatibus vero . . . quas Gailesuindam, germanam Domnæ Brunichildis, tam *in dote* quam *Morganegiba*, hoc est, matutinali dono in Franciam venientem certum est adquisisse." Compare the Διαπαρθένια of the Greeks. *Du Cange, sub voce Morgengabe*: "Notandum vero donum istud voluntarium omnino fuisse, adeo ut modo majus modo minus pro mariti erga conjugem suam majori vel minore amore et caritate, exstiteret."

[2] *Tac. Germ.* xix.: "Melius quidem adhuc eæ civitates, in quibus tantum virgines nubunt, et cum spe votoque uxoris semel transigitur. Sic unum accipiunt maritum. . . ."

back a portion of the dowry she had received from him, to his relations.[1]

The fine for adultery with a free woman was the same as for murder, 200 sols. Yet singularly enough, the rape of an *ingenua puella* was only sixty-two and a half sols, and where the connexion was formed *spontanea voluntate, ambis convenientibus*, it was reduced to forty-five sols. The same fine was levied where any one took away and married the betrothed of another man.

All unions of this nature (whether by marriage or otherwise) between free and bond are prohibited by the severest penalties ; and, as might be expected, a marriage contracted with a slave was a far more heinous offence than a more temporary connexion. The ingenuus who publicly married a slave fell *ipso facto* into slavery himself.[2] If a free woman married a slave all her property fell to the royal fiscus, and any of her relations might kill her with impunity. If any person gave her bread or shelter, he was fined fifteen sols. The slave was broken on the wheel *pessima cruciatu.*[2]

If a puer regis or letus committed a rape upon an ingenua he was put to death.

Smaller offences against the modesty of an ingenua were also severely punished. To stroke her hand or finger, in an amorous manner, was a crime to be atoned for by a fine of fifteen sols. If it was the arm, thirty sols, and if the bosom, thirty-five sols ;

[1] Lex Sal. xliv. et lxxi. [2] Lex Sal. xxv. 2.
[3] Lex Sal. lxix.

offences against the chastity of a female slave were considered chiefly in the light of an attack upon another man's property, and punished accordingly.

The laws of inheritance which obtained among the Franks were simple, but in some respects very peculiar. Neither Tacitus nor the Salic laws know anything of the practice of making wills; the former indeed says expressly that they were not in use among the Germans. The order of succession was for the most part the natural one, the children succeeded their parents[1], with a preference in favour of the sons. Yet in some particulars a remarkable degree of favour is shown to the female sex. The old Germans regarded the relation *of a nephew to his uncle* on the mother's side as a peculiarly close and almost sacred tie; and traces of this sentiment are found in the Salic law.[2] In the chapter of *de Alodis* it is enacted that "if a man die and leave no children, if his mother be still living *she* shall succeed to the inheritance."[3]

[1] *Tac. Germ.* xx.: "Heredes tamen successoresque sui cuique liberi; et *nullum testamentum.*" *Leg. Sal.* lix.: "De Alodis."

[2] *Tac. Germ.* xx.: "Sororum filiis idem apud avunculum, qui apud patrem honor. Quidam sanctiorem arctioremque hunc nexum sanguinis arbitrantur, et in accipiendis obsidibus magis exigunt," &c. Conf. Lex. Sal. lviii.

[3] *Lex Sal.* lix.: "De Alodis. I. Si quis mortuus fuerit et filios non dimiserit si mater sua superfuerit, ipsa in hereditatem succedat. II. Si mater non fuerit et fratrem aut sororem dimiserit, ipsi in hereditatem succedant. III. Si isti non fuerint tunc *soror matris* in hereditatem succedat, et inde de illis generacionibus quicumque proximior fuerit ille in hereditatem succedat. IV. *De terra vero nulla in muliere hereditas est*, sed ad virilem sexum qui fratres fuerint tota terra perteneat."

"If the mother of the deceased be dead, then his father or sister shall succeed.

"If the deceased leave neither father nor sister, then *the sister of the mother* shall succeed, or those who claim through her. But no woman could inherit land, by the Salic law; although the enactments of Chilperic, which are incorporated with it, appear to have introduced certain alterations with regard to females."[1]

We have chiefly confined ourselves in the foregoing account, to the most ancient and important part of the Salic law. The introduction of Christianity necessarily caused modifications, which do not, however, alter its general character. In the later additions to the code we find references to the Christian priesthood, the members of which are protected by very high leodis.

That of a subdeacon was 300 sols; of a deacon or monk 400; of a presbyter 600; and of a bishop 900. The immunities of the Church, and more particularly its right of affording sanctuary to fugitive criminals, are recognised, and heavy penalties are denounced against those who should disregard them.

Want of space has obliged us to forego the consi-

[1] *Lex Sal.* lxxvii. 3.: *Edictus domni Hilperichi regis pro tenore pacis.* "Simili modo placuit ac convenit, ut si cumque vicinos habens aut filios aut filias post obitum suum superstitutus fuerit quamdiu filii advixerint terra habeant, sicut et Lex Salica habet. Et si subito filios defuncti fuerint, *filia simili modo accipiant terras ipsas,* sicut et filii si vivi fuissent aut habuissent . . Et subito frater moriens frater non derelinquerit superstitem, *tunc soror ad terra ipsa accedat possidenda.*"

deration of many points in these first efforts of the German race to constitute civil society, which in themselves are far from being without interest even to the general reader. Among the customs referred to in the laws, which we have not noticed, is the ordeal by red-hot ploughshares.

Allusions are also made to the crimes of poisoning, procuring abortion by drugs (in both of which arts the barbarians would find the Romans excellent instructors), bribery, perjury, arson, and breach of promise of marriage; for all which offences very heavy fines were inflicted.

The necessarily brief and superficial view which we have now taken of this remarkable code, may at least suffice to show how essentially German it is in all its leading characteristics, and how strong a family likeness it bears, not only to what we know of the laws and customs of other German tribes, — as the Saxons, Goths, and Allemani, but also to much that still exists among ourselves; whose happiness it is to be more purely German in our institutions than any other nation. This being the case, it is a matter of surprise as well as regret that laws so essentially German should have been either originally composed in Latin, as some suppose, or at any rate very early deprived of their national dress. And this regret has a deeper source than a mere preference for the national language, rude as it might be, over the mongrel and decrepid latinity of a corrupted and declining race. The change of language took away the law from the hands and hearts of the people for whom it was origi-

nally composed, and who had themselves administered it, and transferred it to the keeping of mere professional lawyers, who perverted it to their own selfish purposes. It facilitated the introduction of the Roman law, with all its servility, chicanery, and finesse. It quickened the Roman element in the Frankish empire, and thereby aided in bringing down the curse of Roman despotism upon mediæval and modern Europe. The terrible consequences to the Germans of taking the laws out of the hands of the people themselves, and placing it, as a powerful instrument of oppression and self-aggrandisement, in the hands of an almost irresponsible few, had been already experienced in the reign of Augustus; when the Cherusci under Arminius, driven into rebellion chiefly by the tyranny of the Roman law, destroyed three imperial legions in the Teutoburgian forest. "Germany," says Florus[1], "might have been reduced, if the barbarians could have borne our vices as well as our commands. . For the Germans, beaten rather than subdued, looked with more suspicion on our morals than our arms."

And again he says, "Varus dared to call a public assembly, and *to try causes in the camp*, as if he could restrain the violence of the barbarians by the rods of the lictors and the voice of the herald (crier)! But they who had been long mourning over their rusty swords and their inactive horses, as soon as they beheld the toga, and the laws more cruel than the sword, took up arms under the command of Arminius."

[1] Flori Hist. iv. 12.

And afterwards, when speaking of the destruction of Varus, the same historian reports, "that nothing in that terrible defeat was more cruel, nothing more intolerable than the insults of the barbarians, *which were more especially directed against the lawyers.* They tore out the eyes of some and cut off the hands of others. They sewed up the mouth of one, after tearing out his tongue, which a barbarian holding in his hand, said, 'Cease at length to hiss, O viper!'"

CHAP. XI.

THE CHURCH.

OUR knowledge of the history of a nation remains very incomplete until we have learned the nature and forms of its religion. If we would really know the character of a people, we must acquaint ourselves with the subjects which occupied the gravest and deepest thoughts of the wise among them, with the faith which awakened the fancy, touched the conscience, and moved the will of the general mass.

The influence exercised by the Christian religion and the Roman Catholic Church in the reconstruction of society out of the ruins of the Roman world, was so predominant, that ecclesiastical history can alone lay open to us the foundations of some of the most remarkable institutions of the Middle Ages. The Franks in particular, who occupy so large a space in mediæval history, were early brought into close connexion with the Church, and were more deeply concerned in its development, more directly influenced by its forms and spirit, than any contemporary nation. The grasping ambition, the great military talents, the craft and cruelty of Clovis, would not have

sufficed to make him master of the vast empire he bequeathed to his successors had he not linked his fortunes to those of the Catholics, whose indomitable spirit, and fervent zeal (which outweighed all personal and even national considerations), served his views as essentially as the most powerful armies. And, on the other hand, it was Clovis, humanly speaking, who decided the question of predominance between the rival theological parties which divided the Christian world. Orthodoxy and Frankish domination advanced, side by side, to victory over kindred, but not the less hostile, tribes and creeds. When the former made a convert, the latter gained a subject; and when a neighbouring nation yielded to the Frankish arms, the landmarks of Catholic Christendom were extended at the expense of Arians or heathens. "Your good fortune," says B. Avitus of Vienna, in a letter to Clovis, "nearly concerns us; as often as you fight, we conquer."[1] "If," says Clovis, "we acquire the friendship of the servants of God, and exalt them with honours, and show our veneration for them by obedience, we trust that we shall continually improve the condition of our kingdom, and obtain both temporal glory, and a country in the kingdom of heaven."[2]

This close alliance, resulting from a clear perception of common interests and mutual advantages, was maintained for ages, and crowned with signal and glorious success. If Clovis rose to dominion with

[1] Vid. Ep. Aviti Ep. Vienn. ad Chlodov. Bouquet iv. p. 49.

[2] Precept. Chlod. pio monast. Reom. (ap. Bouq. iv. p. 615.)

the rising fortunes of the Catholics, Pepin and Charlemagne received no slight assistance in their brilliant career, from that central and despotic power in the Church, which they were chiefly instrumental in bestowing on the Bishop of Rome.

The suddenness with which the Salian Franks, after their settlement in Gaul, appear to have deserted the time-honoured superstitions of their forefathers, and adopted the creed of a race whom they despised, has already been remarked upon. Our surprise at this phenomenon will decrease as our knowledge of the circumstances attending their conversion to Christianity is enlarged. A deeper consideration of the matter too, while, on the one hand, it furnishes us with adequate reasons for the rapidity of the change, will convince us, on the other, that the transition from heathenism to Christianity was by no means so rapid in reality as in appearance. We shall not, indeed, endeavour to explain the conversion of the Franks, or any other nation, by mere human agency. All such attempts must fail, as they deserve to do; yet it is always interesting to observe how the diffusion of that holy faith, which shall one day cover the earth, has been bound up by its Almighty Author with the fate of individuals and the progress of nations.

When the Franks entered Gaul, their ancestral faith, which was peculiarly local in its character, had been greatly weakened by time and distance. They found a religion established there not only nobler and better in itself, — offering infinitely more to the intellect,

the heart, and the soul, — but administered by able men, and decked with everything which could excite the fancy and captivate the sense. Under such circumstances, it needed but the example of the king to lead thousands to genuine, and far more, of course, to nominal profession of the faith of Christ.

To support the Catholic Church and to favour its ministers became a prominent feature in the policy of Clovis and his successors; and all the rising power of the monarchy was exerted in its behalf. Clovis founded his hope of success in a great measure on the good will of the saints and priests, and punished with death a soldier who had taken a little hay from the territory of St. Martin of Tours.

Heathenism was now subjected to the same persecution which it had formerly inflicted, to the sorrow of the enlightened and truly pious[1], and to the infinite detriment of Christianity itself. Even under the Roman emperors, the right and duty of bringing men by force into the Church of Christ had been maintained by many of the most distinguished theologians of the day. Thus Augustine, who had once thought it wrong to force men into Christianity, acknowledged himself convinced of the necessity of persecution.

[1] Hilarii Pictav. con. Auxentium Mediol liber init. Gieseler Kircheng. i. p. 596.: "At nunc proh dolor! divinam fidem suffragia terrena commendant. . . . Terret exiliis et carceribus Ecclesia, credique sibi cogit quæ exiliis et carceribus est credita." As early as the reign of the Roman Emperor Theodosius severe penalties were inflicted on those who *apostatised* from the Christain faith. Vid. Cod. Theodos. lib. xvi. tit. vii. l. 1. "His, qui ex Christianis Pagani facti sunt eripiatur facultas jusque testandi."

"The Lord himself," he says, "first orders that men should be *bidden* to his supper[1], but afterwards *compelled to come.*" "It is better," he says, in a former part of the same Epistle, "that men should be drawn by instruction to the worship of God, rather than driven by pain and the fear of punishment. But though the former" (those who are convinced), "are to be preferred, yet the latter are not to be neglected. For it has been profitable to many (as we have learned by experience), to be first coerced by fear and pain, that they might afterwards be instructed."[2] Leo the Great went still farther, and justified even the execution of heretics and unbelievers.

The same spirit animated the Frankish kings, from Clovis to Charlemagne. Childebert, as early as A.D. 551, published a severe decree against those who should refuse to destroy their idols; and the great apostle of Germany, Boniface, confesses that his missionary efforts would have been of little avail had he not been backed by the sword of Carl Martel and King Pepin. Nor was fear the only motive by which heathens were induced to assume the Christian name. We learn from ecclesiastical writers themselves, that

[1] Luke xiv. 23. Epist. Augustin. 185. ad Bonifac. sec. 21.

[2] With what relentless severity these dangerous and unchristian principles were carried out may be learned from another of Augustine's epistles. Epist. ad Donatum. Procons. Africæ. "Unum solum est quod in tua justitia perti mescimus, ne forte — pro immanitate facinorum, ac non potius pro lenitatis Christianæ consideratione censeas coercendum. . . . Ex occasione terribilium judicum ac legam, ne in æterni judicii pœnas incidant *corrigi eos cupimus non necari.*"

bribery, both direct and indirect, was employed to influence the minds of the unbelieving. Both Eusebius and Augustine bitterly complained of the multitudes who feigned to be converted solely from worldly motives. "How many," says the latter, "only seek Jesus that he may be of service to them in this life! One man has some business on hand, he seeks the intercession of the clergy; another is oppressed by a more powerful man than himself, he flies for refuge to the Church. . . . One man has one reason, another another. The Church is daily filled with such persons." The Emperor Constantine more especially made frequent use of worldly advantage as a bait to induce the heathen to enter the pale of the Church; and even gives directions to the bishops in what manner they may best employ such doubtful means of making converts.[1]

No earthly power, however, would have succeeded in compelling men to turn at the word of command from heathenism to Christianity, had the change been really so great as the terms would seem to imply. The most blindly zealous must have soon discovered that religious convictions are not to be changed by threats of punishment, and that the civil power could at the most only compel men to listen to the instructions, and to place themselves and their children under the influence of the priesthood. The conversion in the real sense of the word, took place, as it must ever

[1] Euseb. Vit. Constantini iii. c. 21. iv. 38, 39.

do, slowly and gradually, *after* the merely formal admission into the pale of the Church. It became an object, therefore, to make the first step *as slight and easy* as possible,—to cheat men, as it were, into their own advantage, by investing Christian truths with a heathen dress, and thus making them more attractive to the idolatrous convert. That this was the *conscious* policy of some of the most eminent Churchmen of the age, is sufficiently proved by the epistle of St. Gregory the Great to the Abbot Mellitus, (by whom he sent instructions to Augustine, in Britain,) concerning the conduct to be observed in the conversion of the Saxons. In this epistle he strongly condemns the practice of destroying the heathen temples, and directs that they should be purified and "converted from the worship of demons to that of the true God," because, he urges, "the people will come more *familiarly* to places to which they are accustomed." And since, he continues, "many oxen are wont to be offered up to the demons, some solemnity should be substituted for these sacrifices. As, for instance, on the day of the dedication of the church, or on the birthday of the holy martyr whose relics are placed in it, let tents be formed of boughs round those churches which were formerly heathen temples, and let the people celebrate a festival with religious *banquets*. The animals are then no longer sacrificed to the devil, but are killed for the worshippers' own food, to the praise of God." "For," he concludes, "it is without doubt impossible to deprive their rude minds of everything at once; as

he who endeavours to ascend some lofty place, must rise by gradual steps and not by leaps."[1]

And thus were great numbers of persons brought into the Christian fold, unprepared and unconverted, — idolators in everything but name. The injurious consequences of this rash policy is observable throughout the whole history of the Frankish Church. When its zeal was relaxed by wealth and luxury, polytheism once more openly raised its head in many parts of the empire; and, what was still more injurious to the best interests of religion, Christianity itself was debased to the grovelling notions of the heathen, whose baneful superstitions were engrafted on the tree of life.

Many writers have attempted to show much of the spirit of Greek and Roman mythology was brought at various periods into the Church, by the policy of adaptation consciously or unconsciously followed; and how many of the corruptions which still deform the Roman Catholic Church may be clearly traced to this polluted source. We shall confine ourselves at present to pointing out a few remarkable passages in the Frankish history of Gregory, which clearly indicate the prevalence of unchristian superstitions, not only among the vulgar, but among the most learned and enlightened men of his age.

It is evident from the history just referred to, from the Epistles of St. Gregory, and many other ecclesiastical records, that the existence of the heathen gods

[1] Greg. M. lib. xi. Ep. 76. ad Mellitum Abbatem.

was not always *denied* by Christian believers, but that they were regarded as evil demons who imposed on the credulous to the destruction of their souls. Gregory of Tours makes no secret of his belief in all kinds of auspices, omens, and prodigies, and betrays throughout his history a degree of simple and thoughtless credulity equalling anything to be met with in Herodotus or Livy. Among other methods of penetrating into futurity, which he describes and made use of himself, were the *Sortes Sanctorum*, in which three of the sacred books,—the Prophets, the Gospels, and the Epistles,—were placed upon the altar, and an omen taken from the sense of the passages which first met the eye when the volumes were opened.[1]

In another place he mentions a certain Claudius, who practised auspices, ut "mos barbarorum est," which last words may seem perhaps to imply a want of belief in their efficacy. Yet he relates, with the greatest nicety and the fullest faith, prodigies of exactly the same kind as terrified the Roman city in the Second Punic War.[2] On one occasion he tells us a shining star appeared in the middle of the moon; but what this *magnum prodigium* portended he confesses his inability to say. The plagues which desolated the country in the sixth century are all announced beforehand by præternatural appearances.[3] These phenomena are of

[1] Greg. Tur. iv. 16.
[2] Ibid. iv. 31., iv. 31., v. 34., vi. 14., vii. 11.
[3] Ibid. v. 24.

various kinds. Sometimes the household vessels of different persons are found to be marked with mysterious characters, which cannot by any means be effaced. Rays of light are seen in the north,—three suns appear in the heavens,—the mountains send forth a mysterious bellowing,—the lights in a church are extinguished by birds,—the trees bear leaves and fruit unseasonably,—serpents of immense size fall from the sky; "and among other signs," he adds, "appeared some which are wont to foreshadow either the death of the king or the destruction of the country."[1]

We are less inclined, perhaps, to be astonished at the extraordinary miracles related to have been performed by saints[2], or the relics of holy martyrs, and even by those who had no claim to be considered either saints or martyrs.[3] But some of these imply a grossness of superstition which appears inconsistent with the very lowest views of Christianity. The people of Tours and Poitiers almost came to blows for the possession of the corpse of St. Martin, and among the arguments brought forward by the former in favour of their claim was this; that while the saint had lived in Poitou he had raised *two dead men*, while since he had been Bishop of Tours he had only raised *one*. "What, therefore," they added, "he did not fulfil while alive, he must make up when he is dead."[4] So strong was the belief in the miraculous

[1] De mirac. S. Martin. (Bouquet. ii. p. 469.)
[2] Greg. Tur. ix. 5. v. 24. vol. 8.
[3] Greg. Tur. iv. 34.
[4] Greg. i. 43.

powers of relics, even when obtained in an unlawful manner, that Mummolus and Guntram-Boso actually *stole* a finger of the martyr Sergius.[1]

The same Guntram-Boso consults an old woman "habentem spiritum phytonis"; and Queen Fredegunda, who does not scruple to hire priests as murderers and to put bishops to death, imputes the sickness of her children to the incantations of a sorceress.[2]

The gravest questions were decided in this age by the test of various ordeals. A Catholic deacon and an Arian priest, who could agree in nothing else, agreed at last to decide their controversy by throwing a ring into boiling water, to see who could fetch it out with the least injury to himself. We need hardly say that the spiritual wager was won by the champion of orthodoxy, who groped in the scalding water for an hour without experiencing the slightest inconvenience.[3]

Yet even in these dark times, when the good seed which had been sown in the hearts of men seemed choked by the rank growth of superstition, the heavenly nature of Christianity was clearly manifested, and "wisdom was justified of her children." The poor and the sick, the prisoner and the slave, the widow

[1] Greg. vii. 31.

[2] On another occasion, when Bishop Briccius of Tours, a man renowned for the purity of his life, was suspected by his flock of being the father of his laundress's new-born child; the Bishop sent for the child, then thirty days old, and questioned it publicly. The child replied, "*non es tu pater meus.*" Greg. Tur. xi. 1.

[3] De Gloria Martyrum, i. p. 81.

and the orphan obtained a claim upon the sympathy and support of their more fortunate fellow-men,—a claim which heathenism, with its characteristic heartlessness, had always rejected and despised. The gracious invitation of the Saviour to the weary and heavy-laden of every class was still heard in the worst of times, and embodied in many a law which loosened the fetters of the captive, and cheered the slave with a returning sense of common humanity. The very superstitions we deplore were some of them signs of misdirected grace,—of a striving in the hearts of men towards God, "If haply they might feel after him and find Him." If the priests *were* regarded with a superstitious and often undeserved reverence, it was because they were supposed to hold near communion with the unseen world, and to be the mediators between man and his Saviour. If martyrs and saints were worshipped, it was because they *were* martyrs, because they *were* saints; because they were looked upon as men who had sacrificed the ease and pleasure of their lives, and even life itself, to benefit the poor, to preach the Gospel, and to bear witness to the truth. No man expected to see the laws of nature suspended by a miracle in favour of a powerful king or a wealthy noble, or sought to possess himself of the relics of a mighty warrior; it was the prayer of the righteous man alone which could avail them; and the bones of the undefiled in his way, that brought blessing and protection to the house or church in which they rested. A new and benign influence was felt throughout society; a prospect of

future dignity and happiness was opened to all, before the glory of which the renown of the warrior and the majesty of the king grew pale and dim; as co-heirs of which the monarch and the slave might easily forget the distance which separates them here. To the power of the sword, to the power of intellect and wealth, the power of holiness was added; the pre-eminently good and holy man became a great and powerful man, and however low his origin, however mean his bodily endowments, he took an equal place before the world with the warrior and the noble.

The exaggerated asceticism of which we find so many instances in the history of Gregory — the desire of seeking seclusion and solitude in the cloister or the desert, of withdrawing from all the endearments and pleasures of family and social life, of foregoing the common bodily comforts which nature herself demands — proceeded from earnest though erroneous views of God and duty. And there was much in the circumstances of the times, if not to justify, at least to palliate the conduct of the Christian who fled from this present world, instead of striving to live piously and godly in it. The frequency of crime—the universality of strife, oppression, sensuality and bloodshed — rendered it next to impossible for one who lived in the world to cherish the spirit, or conform to the precepts, of the Christian religion. Asceticism was the solemn practical protest against the vices of the age, and drew the attention of men to nobler principles and loftier hopes than those which prevailed in the world around them. It is no doubt true, and much to be deplored,

that the reverence and love which followed the genuine recluse for conscience sake into his solitary cell, excited the vanity and ambition of a host of miserable imitators, who wooed the world by pretending to contemn it; but we are not to judge of the worth of what is genuine by the vileness of what is counterfeit; nor ought we to deny our own loving admiration to those mistaken, perhaps, but earnest and truthful souls, who sought by meditation and prayer to prepare themselves for Heaven, and in some degree to anticipate its joys.

Among the more noted of those who retired from the enjoyment of all that the world can afford to the seclusion of a religious life, was Clotilda, the widow of Clovis, and mother of three of his successors. How far, in her case, the retirement was the result or the cause of religious feelings, the history of Gregory leaves us, to say the least, to feel uncertain.[1]

Radegundio also, the Thuringian princess, whom Clotaire had taken prisoner, and compelled to become his wife, was doubtless glad to escape from the bloody splendour of her husband's court, to the quiet of a convent which she reared at her own expense in Poitou; "and so adorned," says the historian, "by prayer and abstinence, by vigils and alms, that she was held in the highest estimation by the people."[2] Still more remarkable is the well-known case of Carloman, the son of Carl Martel, and brother of Pepin, who, as we cannot doubt, from the purest motives, resigned the

[1] Greg. Tur. iii. 18.

[2] Greg. Tur. iii. 7.

purple for the cowl, and sought by fasting, prayer, and alms to atone for his many evil deeds. Many other interesting examples of genuine and lively faith, manifested in a steadfast abstinence even from the most lawful worldly pleasures, may be gleaned from the curious and interesting pages of Gregory of Tours.[1]

Nor amidst all the errors and superstitions in which the work of this writer abounds, can we fail to observe the indications of a better knowledge of the real nature of the Christian religion. A sharp distinction is frequently made by him between the true holiness which seeks no eye but that of God and the vain self-seeking asceticism of the pretender.[2]

Nowhere do we find more pleasing pictures of a faithful bishop, or more hearty condemnations of those who disgraced the sacred office. Avitus, Bishop of Auvergne, is described as one "who dispensed justice to the people, relief to the poor, comfort to the widow, and the greatest support and help to his pupils."[3] Nicetius, Bishop of Lyons, "lived, like the apostle, as far as possible, in charity with all men; so that the Lord, who is charity itself, might be discerned in his bosom. For though he were moved to indignation against any one for his negligence, yet if he amended his ways, Nicetius received the penitent again, as if he had never offended. For he chastened the wrong-doers, and forgave the repentant sinner. He was bountiful in almsgiving and diligent in labour; he

[1] Greg. Tur. i. 39. i. 42.
[2] Greg. iv. 11.
[3] Greg. Tur. iv. 35.

was active and busy in building churches and houses, in tilling the fields and planting vineyards, and yet in all these employments he never neglected the duty of prayer." [1]

We have the greater satisfaction in referring to these examples of the good and faithful men who adorned the Church in this dark age, because in the brief account which we now proceed to give of the rise of the secular power of the clergy, and the decline of discipline and morals among them consequent upon the growing wealth of the Church, we shall have to speak of a very different kind of bishop. The pain, however, which we feel at the contemplation of pride, licentiousness, and cruelty, in the ministers of Christ's religion, is relieved by the thought that it was just the least worthy portion of the priesthood,—those who were tempted by their wealth and power, to contract the vices, and embroil themselves in the feuds of the laity,—which is brought most prominently forward into the light of history. *Qui bene latuit, bene vixit;* and of those who in a humbler sphere endeavoured simply to do their duty in that spiritual office to which it had pleased God to call them, little or nothing found its way into the annals of their country; and we have good reason to believe that amidst the too general corruption of these times, there were always some in whose hearts the life blood of the Church was treasured and preserved.

The Church and its ministers played, as we have already said, so prominent a part even in the secular

[1] Greg. Tur. iv. 36.

and political history of Charlemagne and his predecessors, that it will be necessary to trace the external progress of this mighty institution. When Clovis and his heathen followers had achieved the conquest of Gaul, they found the Christian Church the most, we may say the only, powerful and flourishing institution in the country. The days of persecution were long passed away, and the disciples of that holy faith of which the great Roman historian had so lately spoken, as "*exitiabilis superstitio*,"[1] already sat on the throne of the Cæsars. The dangers of the Church were now of a different—though not less formidable—kind than those which had threatened it in the days of Nero and Diocletian. The Christian emperors, not knowing what spirit they were of, had used the law and the sword against those who dared to remain in their heathen errors; and had corrupted the Church by the admixture of insincere and interested converts. The external well-being of the Church and its ministers had been also sedulously cared for; and the perils of luxury had succeeded to the privations of those who had left all to follow Christ. The lands bestowed upon the Church, either by the emperors themselves or by

[1] *Tac. Hist.* xv. 44.: "Ergo abolendo rumori Nero subdidit reos, et quæsitissimis pœnis adfecit, quos, per flagitia invisos, vulgus Christianos adpellabat. Auctor nominis ejus Christus, Tiberio imperitante, per Procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio adfectus erat: repressaque in præsens, *exitiabilis superstitio* rursus erumpebat, non modo per Judæam, originem ejus mali, sed per urbem etiam, quo cuncta undique atrocia aut pudenda confluunt celebranturque."

private persons, were exempted from many of the usual imposts; while the clergy were freed from almost all those services to the state which pressed with such crushing weight upon their fellow-subjects.[1] From having been the victims, they became the favourites of power; and everything was done which could render their position safe and honourable. The sanctity of their persons protected them in scenes of the greatest violence; and they were raised above the persecution of their enemies, and too often above the reach of legitimate authority, by the erection of distinct tribunals for the trial of ecclesiastics. As the universally acknowledged censors of the morals of both high and low, they exercised an influence, we might say a power, of almost unlimited extent. No wonder then that the priestly office became the object of desire to thousands of eager candidates. The Church, in fact, was, even in a worldly sense, the only secure retreat from the misery and ruin in which the falling empire was involving the whole Roman world; and so preponderating were the advantages enjoyed by its ministers, and so great the number of those who needed the shelter it afforded, that even before the year 320 A.D. the Emperor Constantine was compelled to prohibit by enactments the greater portion of his subjects from taking holy orders.[2] At the time of the Frankish

[1] The "munera curialia" spoken of above, p. 369.

[2] He enacted that "no Decurion or son of a Decurion, nor even any one possessed of private property, and therefore well suited for the discharge of public offices, should take refuge in the

conquest of Gaul, the Gallican Church had not only great privileges and extensive influence, but considerable landed possessions. Yet these could not at that time have been immoderately great, as they afterwards became, for the Arian faith prevailed through more than half Gaul; and in the old Salian and Ripuarian lands Christianity, under any name, had been almost entirely extirpated.[1] Whatever the extent of the Church lands may have been, they were probably respected by the invaders; or, if the rights of the clergy suffered any diminution in the first confusion, the speedy conversion of Clovis and his warriors soon brought them ample reparation. Converts are proverbially liberal in support of their new opinions; and it was in the reign of Clovis that the great tide of prosperity began to set in towards the Church. The kings of the Franks, both good and bad, and especially Clovis and his sons, Guntram and Dagobert, did much to enrich the

name and obedience of the priesthood." *Cod. Theod.* xvi. 2, 3.: "Nullum deinceps Decurionem, vel ex Decurione progenitum, vel etiam instructum idoneis facultatibus, atque obeundis publicis muneribus opportunum, *ad clericorum nomen obsequiumque confugere:* sed eos de cetero in defunctorum duntaxat clericorum loca subrogari, *qui fortuna tenues neque muneribus civilibus teneantur obstricti.*"

[1] Kilian, the Irish missionary, preached the gospel near Würzburg (in Bavaria), the inhabitants of which were in his time worshippers of Diana, and his endeavours to convert them cost him his life in A.D. 689. Vid. Acta S. S. ad. d. 8 Jul. The inhabitants of the Ardennes were converted to Christianity by Bishop Hubert, in the middle of the eighth century after Christ. Eleutherii, i. 20. Feb. 3. 187. Roth, p. 66.

clergy; but infinitely more was bestowed by private persons, who were excited to an almost wanton liberality by the hopes and fears of superstition.[1] Nor were the priests contented with the purely spontaneous offerings of their barbarian converts. The strongest stimulants were employed to quicken their pious generosity; and Charlemagne himself complains that his bishops and abbots allured and frightened foolish people into giving up their goods, by glowing descriptions of the joys of heaven, and the pangs of hell. The regular trade which had long been carried on in relics is also denounced, and the base motives and unwarrantable ends of those who engaged in it, are exposed in the Capitularies of the same great monarch.[2]

[1] The maxim was constantly repeated, "Sicut aqua extinguit ignem, ita eleemosyna extinguit peccatum." Muratori Ant. Ital. v. 628.

[2] *Capit. duplex Aquisgranense* anno 811. (Mon. Germ. iii. 167. c. v.): "Inquirendum,—si ille seculum dimissum habeat, qui quotidie possessiones suas augere quolibet modo qualibet arte non cessat, suadendo de cœlestis regni beatitudine, comminando de æterno supplicio inferni, et sub nomine Dei aut cujuslibet sancti tam divitem quam pauperem, qui simplicioris naturæ sunt, et minus docti atque cauti inveniuntur, si rebus suis exspoliant, et legitimos heredes eorum exheredant, ac per hoc plerosque ad flagitia et scelera, propter inopiam—compellunt, ut quasi necessario furta et latrocinia exerceant. C. vi.: Iterum inquirendum quo modo seculum reliquisset, qui cupiditate ductus propter adipiscendas res, quas alium videt possidentem, homines ad perjuria et falsa testimonia precio conducit. C. vii.: Quid de his dicendum, qui quasi ad amorem Dei et sanctorum — *ossa et reliquias sanctorum corporum de loco ad locum transferunt*, ibique novas basilicas construunt, et quoscunque potuerint, ut res suas illuc tradant instantissime adhortantur."

Yet we are not to impute this eagerness on the part of the clergy to accumulate landed property entirely to the lust of wealth, and the carnal pleasures it bestows. There were other and more legitimate motives, inherent in the times and circumstances, which greatly quickened the natural cupidity of the human heart. We have seen that the accumulation of land in a few hands had commenced in Gaul previously to the Frankish conquest. Nor did the process cease when that event had taken place; on the contrary, the Germans soon began to rival the Gauls in adding field to field; and lost, in consequence, much of their old love for liberty and equality. In such a race the clergy could not without danger be altogether left behind. The instinct of self preservation, as well as the dictates of ambition, prompted them to strive after the possession of land, as the only anchor of safety in those troubled times; as the necessary condition of the external stability, influence, and progress of the Christian Church. No one can read the annals of that troubled period without the reflection that the Church, without land or money, unwarlike in its very nature, and unable to command or buy protection, would soon have been despised and trodden under foot.

The clergy, therefore, had every motive to accumulate wealth, which could act upon their minds, whether as individuals or as members of an order. And under such a stimulus they not only used, but shamefully abused, the advantages they derived from their own superiority and the gross ignorance and super-

stition of the laity. At the end of the seventh century, it is calculated that at least *one third* of the soil of Gaul was the property of the Church.[1] The modes in which these enormous acquisitions had been made were very various, but seldom very honourable. The greater part was derived from the testamentary dispositions of those who purchased eternal happiness at the expense of their heirs. Many gave up their estates during their life-time, either in full and immediate possession, or on condition of enjoying the *use*. The motive of the latter kind of grant was not always a religious one. Many sought to secure from rapacious neighbours what they felt their own inability to defend, by making it a part of the inviolable property of some guardian saint. Vast sums were collected from the superstitious by the exhibition and sale of the bones and relics of departed saints. Nor were the darker means of forgery and perjury left unemployed. So common indeed appears to have been the practice of forging testaments and deeds of gift, that the notaries were compelled to take an oath that they would not assist in the preparation of false documents.[2]

The disappointed and defrauded heirs made all the resistance in their power, and the civil authority was continually enacting laws to check the alarming flow

[1] *Montesquieu, Esp. des Loix*, xxxi. 10.: "Le clergé recevoit tant, qu'il faut que dans les trois Races on lui ait donné plusieurs fois tous les biens du royaume."

[2] Greg. Tur. x. 19. Of the 360 Merovingian Diplomata given in Brequigny (Dipl. ad Res Franc. spect., Paris, 1791), about 130 are considered false. Vid. Roth, p. 257.

of wealth into the coffers of the Church—but in vain. The threat of excommunication was sufficient to strike terror into the boldest heart. And this terrible engine was used not only against those who really encroached upon the acknowledged rights of the Church, but against every one, without distinction, who attempted to recover property which had once passed into the hands of the clergy. The separate jurisdiction for spiritual persons rendered it extremely difficult to bring their mal-practices to light; but even when the clearest proofs were given that documents had been forged, or obtained by improper means, it was still regarded as a heinous offence to seek for restitution.[1]

Nor was it only the pious believer, or the conscience-stricken sinner who dreaded the denunciations of the Church; the most irreligious could not be indifferent to excommunication, to which the civil power had attached the heaviest temporal penalties. "Let him," runs the decree of Childebert, "who refuses to obey his bishop, and has been excommunicated, endure the eternal condemnation of God, and moreover let him be excluded for ever from our palace; and let him who is unwilling to bear the chastenings (*medicamenta*) of his bishop be deprived of all his property

[1] *Concil. Lugdun.* ii. can. 2. (an. 567. Sirmond. i. p. 326.): "Id specialiter statuentes, ut etiamsi quorumcumque religiosorum voluntas, aut necessitate, aut simplicitate aliquid a legum sæcularium ordine visa fuerit discrepare, voluntas tamen defunctorum debent inconcussa manere, et in omnibus Deo propitio, custodiri." Conf. Conc. Aurel. iii. can. 22., et Conc. Vasense i. c. 4.

in favour of his lawful heirs."[1] Thus destitution and disgrace in this world were added to eternal damnation in the next.

The increase of ecclesiastical wealth was moreover greatly accelerated by the celibacy of the priesthood, which prevented the returns of property once possessed by ecclesiastics into its natural channels.

Even the private property of the clergy generally, though not necessarily, went to enrich the religious institutions to which they had more particularly belonged. It was not, indeed, legally incumbent upon a bishop or abbot to bequeath his wealth to his cathedral or his abbey, but it was very much at variance with the general custom to dispose of it in any other way.[2] And thus the Church, continually making fresh acquisitions, and resigning little or nothing, attained to wonderful results in a comparatively short space of time.

The danger arising to the State from this perpetual drain upon the resources of the country was clearly seen long before any attempt was made to provide a remedy. Chilperic, on whom, as we have seen above, the annalists have bestowed the epithets of "tyrant" and "second Nero" (which many a monarch

[1] *Decretio Childeberti Regis*, an. 595. ii.: "Qui vero Episcopum suum noluerit audire, et excommunicatus fuerit perennem condemnationem apud Deum sustineat (this many would have braved), *et insuper de palatio nostro sit omnino extraneus*, et omnes facultates suas parentibus legitimis amittat, qui noluit sacerdotis sui medicamenta sustinere." It might be disputed whether this decree was intended to contain a *climax* or a *bathos*.

[2] Conc. Agathens. can. 33. (an. 506). Sirmond. i. p. 167.

who deserved them more has escaped), complains that the royal treasury was empty, and that all its riches had passed into the hands of the Church. "None," he says, "truly reign but the bishops; our dignity has departed and is transferred to them."

Gregory of Tours[1] accuses this monarch *of destroying the wills* which were made in favour of the Church, and adds that he constantly blasphemed the bishops, and turned them into ridicule in his private hours. But that it was not only men of depraved character and enemies of religion, like Chilperic, who brought such charges against the clergy, may be gathered from the language of Charlemagne himself, at a later period, even after the discipline of the Church had been greatly improved by Boniface. "Do you call that serving God,"—he says to the bishops and abbots, in the capitulary to which we have just referred, —"when you do not even scruple to seduce the people into perjury and falsehood in order to increase your riches?" Such language from the lips of a pious and orthodox monarch like Charlemagne reveals to us the real state of the case, and leads us to attribute some degree of truth even to the angry and envious words of Chilperic.

The increased dignity and influence, which accrued to the whole ecclesiastical body from the accumulation of wealth, were chiefly centred in the persons of the bishops and abbots. Throughout the entire history of the Merovingian and Carlovingian

[1] Greg. Tur. vi. 46.

dynasties, the Catholic bishops stand forth in bold relief as the most wealthy and influential personages in the state. They are constantly brought under our notice as the counsellors and, not unfrequently, as the censors of kings; as the companions, on a footing of superiority, of the haughtiest and most powerful seigniors; as leaders in every important political movement. Like the rich and great among the laity, they appeared surrounded by vassals to whom their will was law, and numerous dependants lived upon their lands in a state of hereditary servitude. Within the limits of the Church itself, they were irresponsible masters of the inferior clergy, through whom they exercised a wide and irresistible influence over the people. And to all the other advantages, temporal and spiritual, which they enjoyed in so remarkable a combination was added the enormous power of superior mental cultivation. No wonder then that the prelates were objects of envy even to a king, and that a bishop's see was a mark of ambition to the highest and noblest in the land.

We shall endeavour as briefly as possible to trace the steps by which the dignitaries of the Frankish Church attained to the proud position in which we find them even under the Merovingian kings.

At the time of the Frankish conquest the Gallican bishops were possessed of considerable influence, but their power was principally a moral power: and for this reason perhaps it alone suffered neither overthrow nor diminution from the barbarian invaders. The relative position of the bishops both to conquerors and

conquered was a singularly favourable one. The Romance population, who had always respected them as overseers and rulers of the Church, could not but regard them with increased reverence, after seeing that theirs was the only power which the invaders did not and could not overcome. To the Franks, on the other hand, they appeared as the principal representatives of Roman civilisation—which, even in its ruins, they could not but respect—and as the possessors in an eminent degree of the power which knowledge gives, —a power which is all the more formidable to the vulgar, because its nature and extent are hidden from their sight.

After no long time, as we have seen, the bishops took a still more advantageous position with regard to the new inhabitants, in consequence of the conversion of Clovis to the Christian faith. Their influence with the Gallic population rendered their willing co-operation in the task of governing his newly acquired territories of the highest importance to the king; while their superior abilities and greater knowledge of affairs made them by far the most useful counsellors to whom he could apply in all the weightier matters of religion, law, and policy.

The earlier Merovingians had no occasion to feel either suspicion or jealousy of the rising power of the Catholic clergy, who needed the friendly support of the civil power in their struggle with their Arian rivals. The Church and the State had in fact the greatest interest in raising and strengthening each other; and as long as the former abstained from all pretensions of

independence, the haughty Merovingians did not scruple to manifest the utmost reverence towards the dignified clergy.[1]

To this, which we may call the legitimate influence of the episcopal office, was added the material strength which the bishop acquired as the administrator of the ever increasing wealth of the Church. In his hands was the exclusive management of all Church lands within his diocese; and though he was bound in the performance of his functions to adhere to established rules and customs, and to apply a certain portion of the funds to certain purposes, he had still a very wide field for the exercise of an almost arbitrary power. He could not of course, alienate the landed property of the Church, or burden it with lasting liabilities. It was incumbent upon him to provide for the necessary repairs of ecclesiastical buildings, the maintenance of the inferior clergy, the relief of the poor, and the decent celebration of religious services. But neither the salaries of his subalterns nor the services of the churches, increased in amount and splendour in proportion with the rapidly increasing means which were placed in the bishop's hands. His acknowledged share of the entire income of his diocese was a lion's one: and of the surplus which remained after defray-

[1] Vita Severini Agaun. c. 6. Mabill. i. 569. (ap. Roth. p. 265.). When Severin approached Clovis, for the purpose of healing him, the king worshipped him. "*Et adoravit eum rex.*" When Germanus, Bishop of Paris, had one day been made to wait too long in the antechamber of King Childebert, the latter was (naturally) taken ill in the night. The bishop was sent for; and when he came, "*Rex adlambit Sancti palliolum.*"

ing the regular expenses he was irresponsible master. Was he a pious and self-denying shepherd of the flock of Christ, he spent it in works of charity, in instructing the ignorant, in relieving the condition of the wretched serfs and slaves who groaned under the tyranny of brutal owners. But if otherwise, he might use it, as we see that the majority did, in adding external splendour to the episcopal office, in gathering around him military vassals and servile dependents, and in vying in luxury and pride with the gayest and proudest of the laity.

The humble subordination of the inferior clergy to their spiritual head was secured by their absolute dependence upon him not only for their advancement in the Church, but even for present comfort and well being. A life interest, indeed, in a portion of land was generally allotted to them; but this afforded little protection against a tyrannical bishop, who could suspend them from their office, take away their land for disobedience, and even subject them to imprisonment and flogging.[1]

As we may suppose, however, the almost arbitrary

[1] Vid. Conc. Narbon. an. 589. can. 5, 6. 10. 13. (Sirmond. i. 399.). According to Concil. Matisc. i. an. 581, c. viii. (Sirmond. i. 372.), and Greg. v. 51., and viii. 22., the bishop could inflict punishment, and a certain number of lashes (Conc. Matisc. says *thirty-nine*). Bishop Joseph, of Le Mans, caused several of his clergy, who had complained of him to the king, to be whipped, blinded, and *mutilated*. "Præcepit ipsos sacerdotes . . . . flagellare, atque (quod pejus est dicere) cæcare et castrare."—*Episcop. Cenom.* c. xx. Mabillon, Analecta, p. 291. Conf. Greg. Tur. iv. 36.

power thus exercised, and too often abused, by the bishops and abbots was not established without violent opposition on the part of the sufferers. And since the latter had no legal grounds on which to base their opposition, their resistance naturally took the form of sudden and violent rebellion, which was frequently accompanied by bloodshed, and even murder.[1] In the main, however, the bishops triumphed, and the presbyters and deacons were gradually compelled to submit to an authority from which appeal was extremely difficult, and resistance, however successful for the moment, certain to bring ruin on the heads of those who offered it.[2]

As the bishops and abbots rose in the social scale, the rest of the priesthood seemed to fall; and it is a singular proof of pride and love of power in the former, and of degradation in the latter, that many bishops preferred to consecrate persons of servile condition for the sacred office, that they might hear no complaints of unworthy treatment, and meet with no resistance in the exercise of an arbitrary rule.[3]

[1] For rebellions of this sort, vid. Greg. Tur. vi. 11. 36., x. 15.

[2] *Concil. Aurel.* iii. c. 21. (Sirmond. i. 254.): "Si quis clericorum *ut nuper multis locis diabolo instigante actum fuisse perpatuit* rebelli auctoritate se in unum conjuratione intercedente collegerint," &c. The rights of the clergy against the bishop were few enough. One by which the rebellious clergy of Ætherius, Bishop of Lisieux, justified their opposition is singular. Concil. Turon. ii. c. xiii. gave them the right of driving strange women from the household of a bishop who had no *episcopa licentiam extraneas mulieres de frequentia habitationis ejicere.*" Conf. Greg. Tur. v. 51.

[3] The abbots of those monasteries which were independent of the bishop, acquired the same power over the monks of their

There was then everything in the position of the bishop to excite desire and gratify ambition. Equal in wealth and station to the richest seigniors and most favoured courtiers, and in his priestly character superior to the king himself, he was at the same time the companion of the rich and great, and the guardian and friend of the poor and lowly. In every contest with the secular power, the popular feeling, which extended even to the hearts of his opponents, was in his favour. Nor could such collisions be avoided. The privileges granted to the Church, in the earlier days of its comparative poverty, proved extremely embarrassing to the State, when the clergy became the greatest proprietors of land in the kingdom. A large portion of every gau (or canton) belonged to the Church; and being exempted from the usual burdens, and possessing a jurisdiction of its own, it was, as it were, withdrawn from the cognizance of the civil power.

house, as the bishops over their inferior clergy, and rose to wealth by nearly the same means. Their tyranny, when they were inclined to exercise it, was even worse than that of the bishops, because they were enabled to watch all the proceedings of the inmates of their house. We meet with the most extraordinary instances of cruelty on the part of the abbots, and of turbulent opposition on that of the monks. The second Abbot of Aindre, Adalfred, who succeeded Ermeland, who became a hermit, starved his monks, that he might save money to build with, and had them most cruelly flogged. (Roth, p. 264.) Ratgar, Bishop of Fulda, was deprived of his see, in the time of Charlemagne, on the petition of his clergy, who say, in their *libellus supplex*, that Ratgar starved old weak monks, forbade them to use a stick in walking, and that he compelled or enticed many to become monks for their money. Mabillon, Acta Sanctor. iv. i. 261.

Nor was it easy or safe to infringe upon the immunities of the Church, which—besides being guaranteed by the law[1], and defended with the greatest pertinacity by the clergy themselves—were supposed to be under the especial protection of some patron saint, the rightful owner of the land.

The conflicting claims of the civil and ecclesiastical powers threw the count and the bishop, the representatives of either, into an almost constant attitude of rivalry and contest. The advantage was here again almost invariably on the side of the bishop, who, with equal wealth, had means, as a priest and a ruler of priests, of acting upon the popular mind, which were entirely wanting to his opponent.

We cannot wonder, under these circumstances, that the office of bishop was filled by persons utterly unfit in character and habits to minister to the religious wants of the community. As early as the seventh century, in fact, the Franco-Gallican Church, if we are to judge of it from its highest dignitaries, would seem to have almost entirely lost the character of a religious institution; and to have existed chiefly to enable a few great spiritual lords to live in the greatest splendour and to engage, with vast influence and almost boundless means, in the political feuds by which the country was distracted.

Many circumstances combined at that period to bring about this lamentable perversion. At a time

[1] Capit. Interrogationis de iis quæ Carolus M. pro communi omnium utilitate interroganda constituit. Aquisgrani, 811. (Monum. Germ. (Hist.) iii. p. 106.).

when its rapidly increasing wealth, and the rising ambition of the prelates, called for the soundest administration, the internal discipline of the Church had become lax; and the *metropolitan constitution*, which might have done something towards keeping the bishops in check, had almost entirely disappeared. Nor did the safeguard of a popular election any longer exist. The bishops had been originally chosen, *a clero et populo*, and in the earlier ages of the Church, while their office retained its merely spiritual value and dignity, the civil authority was not much tempted to interfere. But the predominant power of the Frankish kings, and the mighty influence they acquired after the conversion of Clovis, enabled them to usurp, from the very first, the right of nomination to the vacant sees.[1] The clergy, indeed, struggled manfully at times for the recovery of their natural rights; but in the main the *præceptio* of the king could dispense with the *consensus* of the clergy and the people, and create a bishop out of the merest layman and the greatest profligate.[2]

We have a letter of St. Remigius (Remi), the converter of Clovis, in which he replies to a violent protest of the bishops against the nomination of one Claudius, an unworthy person, as presbyter; and in which he excuses himself, not by defending the man's character, but by saying that Clovis, "who was not only the preacher but the defender of the Catholic

[1] Greg. Tur. iv. 26. Conf. Capitula Imp. Caroli que in Lege Sal. mittenda sunt, c. ii. (Merkel, Lex. Sal. p. 47.).

[2] Greg. Tur. iv. 18., v. 37.

faith, the ruler of kingdoms, the guardian of his country, the victor of nations, had *enjoined* it."[1]

The clergy of Tours expressly declare to Cato, the presbyter, to whom they came to offer the bishopric on the death of Guntar, "*Non nostra te voluntate expetivimus, sed regis præceptione.*"[2]

Almost the only person, therefore, from whom the higher clergy had anything to hope or fear was the king; who regarded the great ecclesiastical offices as so much patronage, or even property, which he might bestow upon his favourites, or sell to the highest bidder.[3]

Even the assemblies of the clergy were dependent upon the king, both for permission to meet, and for the confirmation of their decrees.[4]

[1] *Epist. S. Remigii ad Heraclium et alios* (Bouquet, iv. p. 52.): "Scribitis Canonicum non fuisse quod (rex) jussit. Summo fungamini Sacerdotio. Regionum Præsul, custos patriæ, gentium triumphator injunxit."

[2] Vid. Greg. Tur. iv. 11. In the same chapter we have an indication that bishops were deposed by the king, without any cause but the desire of bestowing their sees elsewhere.

[3] Greg. Tur. iv. 35., v. 47.

[4] See a letter from a Synod, in A.D. 511, to Clovis (*Lœbell*, 324.): "Ita ut si ea quæ nos statuimus etiam vestro recta esse judicio comprobantur, tanti consensus Regis ac Domini majori auctoritate servandam tantorum firmet sententiam Sacerdotum." We have an account in Greg. iv. 26. of something like a collision on this point between the clergy and the king. A Synod at Saintes in A.D. 562, deposed a bishop, who had been appointed by Clotaire without the consensus of the metropolitan bishops. Clotaire was already dead, but his son Charibert not only reversed their decree of deposition, but severely punished all those who took any part in the opposition to the royal will. Concil. Aurel. v. can. 10. (Sirmond. i. p. 280.); vid. Lœbell's Gregor von Tours, p. 341.

The corrupting effect of this, the sole control, to which the bishops were subject, was increased in its hurtful operation by the character of the majority of the Merovingian kings. Those who were set in high places, and should have been an example to the flock of Christ, were the courtiers and companions of the crafty and bloody Clovis, and the long line of his wicked or imbecile successors, who form the most detestable dynasty that ever filled a Western throne. Clovis, Chilperic, Clotaire, and Fredegunda, were the virtual heads of the Frankish Church; their favour was the only path to ecclesiastical distinction; and their tribunal was the only one to which the bishops were amenable. That this was the real state of the case, is proved by numberless passages in Gregory of Tours, and especially by the language which that prelate and historian himself makes use of to Chilperic. "If any of us, O king," he says, "should venture to transgress the bounds of justice, he can be corrected by thee; but if thou shouldest transgress, who will call thee to account? For we speak to thee, and if thou choosest thou hearest; but if thou art unwilling, who shall condemn thee, except Him who has declared that He is justice itself?" [1]

The sad results of the many evil influences to which we have referred, and many more which we are compelled to pass over, are clearly seen in every page of this period. The corruption displays itself more prominently in the bishops themselves, but no doubt their evil example loosened the bands of mo-

[1] Greg. Tur. v. 19.

rality and discipline throughout the whole fabric of the Church. Gregory is evidently restrained on many occasions from setting forth all the enormities committed by his episcopal brethren, "lest he should seem to be a *detractor fratrum;*" yet his history contains enough to fill us with disgust and sorrow at the corruptions into which the foremost ministers of religion had fallen.[1] Simony of the most unscrupulous and open kind was almost universal.[2]

In A.D. 591, Eusebius, "a Syrian merchant," purchased the bishopric of Paris; and, as soon as he was installed, discharged all those who held offices under his predecessor, and supplied their place exclusively with Syrians.[3] King Guntram, who seems to have had scruples on the subject, and condemned simony in the strongest terms, not only received bribes from clerical candidates for the episcopal office, but appointed Desiderius, a layman, from the same corrupt motives. And this he did, "though he had promised with an oath never to ordain a bishop from the laity.

[1] Greg. Tur. v. 4.

[2] "Already (A. D. 527) at that time," we read, in the Vita S. Galli, "that evil germ had begun to bear fruit, viz., *that the priestly office was sold by the kings*," &c. *Bouquet*, iii. p. 410.: "Averni vero Clerici cum consensu insipientium facto, et multis muneribus ad Regem venerunt. Jam tunc germen illud iniquum cœperat frutificare, ut sacerdotium venderetur a regibus aut compararetur a clericis . . . ." The king ordered a banquet to be given in honour of Gallus's elevation to the episcopal chair, at the public expense. "Nam referre erat solitus (Gallus) non amplius donasse se pro episcopatu quam unum triantem coquo qui servivit ad prandium." Conf. Greg. Tur. iii. 2., viii. 20. 39.

[3] Greg. Tur. x. 26.

But to what," adds the historian, "will not the *auri sacra fames* compel the human heart?"[1]

The conduct of those who were thus admitted into the episcopal sees, was generally in accordance with the auspices under which they entered upon their office. The prevalence among them of crimes, not only disgraceful to their sacred character, but to humanity itself, may be proved from the writings of one of themselves, who confessedly deals tenderly with his brethren.

Cautinus who, about the year A.D. 553, was made Bishop of Tours, is described as "having acted in such a manner as to be execrated by all men; excessively addicted to wine, and generally so drenched in liquor, that he could scarcely be carried from a banquet by four men. For which reason he became epileptic, as was often clearly made manifest to the people. He was so inclined to avarice, that he regarded it as destruction to himself, if he could not take away something from the hands of those whose possessions bordered on his own. The more powerful he deprived of their property by quarrels and abuse; the inferior classes he plundered with open violence."[2] Nor were these the most serious of his offences. He also buried a presbyter alive in the crypt of his church for refusing to surrender something which the bishop had demanded of him.

Eonius, in the year A.D. 580, fell down in a drunken

[1] In Acts of Simony by Guntram. Greg. Tur. vi. 7. 39., viii. 22.

[2] Greg. Tur. iv. 12.

fit when performing mass at the altar in Paris; and "was generally so disgustingly (deformiter) drunk, that he could not walk."[1] The bishops Palladius and Bertchramnus having quarrelled at the table of King Guntram, accused each other of "adultery and perjury;" at which, says Gregory, "many laughed, but some who were possessed of greater wisdom grieved."[2] The deeds of Pappolus, Bishop of Langres, were of such a character that the historian thinks it better to pass over them without notice.[3]

Badegisil, Bishop of Mans in A.D. 586, was a monster in human form, and had a wife even worse than himself. He was "very cruel to the people, and was continually robbing different persons of their property. His wife increased the savage ferocity of his heart, and urged him on by the stimulants of her most wicked counsels. Not a day, not a moment, passed, in which he did not wallow in the spoils of his fellow-citizens, or engage in various altercations. He daily argued causes with the judge, carried on secular warfare, and even went so far as to beat men with his own hand, saying, 'What! because I am a priest, shall I not avenge my wrongs?'" The historian pro-

[1] Greg. Tur. v. 41. [2] Ibid. viii. 7.

[3] The Abbot Dagulfus (A. D. 583) frequently committed theft and homicide, et "in adulteriis nimium dissolutus erat." He was at last killed, while in a drunken fit, by an injured husband. "Ideoque," adds Gregory, "documentum sit hæc causa clericis, ne contra Canonum statuta extranearum mulierum consortio potiantur: cum hæc et ipsa lex canonica et omnes Scripturæ Sanctæ prohibeant, præter has feminas de quibus crimen non potest æstimari."—*Greg. Tur.* viii. 19.

ceeds to relate the deeds of this bishop's wife, who was possessed of "ineffable malice;" and after relating things too horrible to be repeated here, he adds, "and many other wicked deeds she committed, about which I have thought it better to be silent!"[1]

We are confirmed in our opinion of the prevalence of corrupt morals among the clergy of this period, by the great lenity with which their crimes are treated by others of their own order.[2]

Sagittarius and Salonius, bishops of Gap and Embrun in Dauphiné, lived in perpetual bloodshed and lasciviousness, and though twice deposed for their crimes, they were twice restored again to their episcopal chairs, *and king Guntram believed that his son's death was the consequence of his having put these wretches in prison!* In the year A. D. 579, they were again accused before a synod assembled at Châlons-sur-Saône under the auspices of King Guntram. "They were accused," says Gregory, "not only of adultery, but of murder.[3]

[1] Greg. Tur. viii. 39.

[2] Gregory gives us an account of a certain priest (of Mans), who was "luxuriosus nimis, amatorque mulierum et gulæ ac fornicationis, omnique immunditiæ valde deditus." This man took about with him a woman of good family in male attire, and having been discovered by her relations, was given into custody, while the unfortunate woman was *burned.* The priest himself was put up for sale, with the understanding that if no offer was made for him he should be put to death. Bishop Ætherius of Lisieux redeemed ("castigatum *verbis lenibus*") him by paying twenty gold pieces, *and afterwards intrusted him with the instruction of the boys of his diocese.* Greg. vi. 36.

[3] Greg. Tur. v. 21.

The council of bishops decided that these offences might be atoned for by penitence (a sentence equivalent to an acquittal); but, unluckily for the culprits, they were also charged with treason to king and country, and for this offence were stripped of their episcopal robes.

While the episcopal order was in this deplorable state, the discipline and dignity of the Church, as we might naturally suppose, were almost entirely lost. So many of the bishops and abbots lived mere laymen, that their sacred character was often forgotten by others as well as themselves; and notwithstanding the laws by which their separate jurisdiction was defended[1] they were often called to a severe account by the civil power, and even subjected to capital punishment. It was in fact the crimes of the bishops and their consequent loss of influence among the people, which emboldened the kings to treat them in such an arbitrary manner as they frequently did. Clotaire I. drove Bishop Nicetius from his diocese, for daring to rebuke and excommunicate him for his crimes. And so far were the bishops from venturing to resist this attack upon one of the noblest of their order, that Nicetius was deserted by all his

[1] The council held by Guntram at Macon, in A.D. 581, laid the ban on all judges who should punish the clergy absque causa criminalis. Conc. Matisc. i. can. 7. (Sirmond. i. p. 371.) *Ibid.* can. 43.: "Quicunque Judex, aut secularis Presbytero, aut Diacono, ut cuilibet de Clero, aut de junioribus absque voluntate Episcopi aut Archidiaconi, vel Archipresbyteri, injuriam inferre præsumpserit anno ab omnium Christianorum consortio habeatur extraneus."

brethren of the priesthood with the exception of one deacon.[1]

Theodorus, afterwards bishop of Tours, was thrown into prison by Guntram in A.D. 582, though no evidence of guilt was brought against him, and Epiphanius, another bishop who was incarcerated on the same occasion, died in confinement *post multa supplicia*.[2]

Into so deplorable a state had the Frankish Church fallen, towards the end of the seventh century, that instead of being able to spread the light of Christianity over surrounding nations, she seemed more likely to be herself overwhelmed by the returning tide of heathenism. The missionary spirit had apparently died out of the Franco-Gallic clergy, who, engaged as they were, in the unscrupulous acquisition, and too often in the brutal enjoyment of wealth, cared little that the people of many a diocese were still flocking to their heathen temples, and their sacred groves. The power of self-regeneration seemed completely wanting to the Frankish Church, and had there not existed in the old British and Irish Churches a purer spirit and a quicker zeal for the conversion of the nations, many parts of Germany must have remained for a considerable period in a state of heathen darkness.

The first efforts to restore some degree of order

[1] *Vita S. Nicetii* (Bouquet, iii. p. 419.): "Ab Episcopis reliquis, qui adulatores Regis effecti fuerant atque a suis omnibus derelictus. . ." (A.D. 582.) Greg. Tur. vi. 24.

[2] Greg. Tur. vi. 24.

and morality to the Gallic Church were made by St. Columban, St. Gall, and St. Killian, all of whom belonged to the British Church, the records of which were carefully destroyed by the Romish hierarchy. Their labours, however, appear to have had no perceptible results. The more successful and more celebrated Winfried, who well deserved the name of the Apostle of Germany, was of the same nation as his forerunners, but differed from them in being a zealous adherent of the Romish ritual. Winfried, better known under the name of Boniface, was of Anglo-Saxon origin, and was born at Kyrton, in Devonshire, about A.D. 684. Very early in life he became a monk, and was renowned in his own country for that purity of manners and earnest zeal for the interests of religion, of which neither the severe trials, nor even the brilliant successes of his succeeding life could ever deprive him. The missionary spirit, by which he was more strongly possessed than almost any man of whom we read in history, impelled him to quit the seclusion of the cloister, and to undertake the conversion of Friesland, to which country he went in A.D. 716. The time of his appearance there was peculiarly unfortunate, as being immediately after the temporary expulsion of the Franks by Ratbod; and he was obliged to return to England without accomplishing his purpose. It is worthy of notice that these first unavailing efforts to convert the heathen were made without any previous application for the sanction of the Pope. It was therefore in all probability after his return

from Friesland that Winfried formed those decided opinions respecting the outward unity of the Church, and the divine, absolute, and universal authority of the successors of St. Peter, for which he subsequently became so remarkable.

In A.D. 718, having obtained letters of recommendation from Daniel, Bishop of Winchester, to the Pope, he made his first journey to Rome. A man who united so much undoubted piety with so much devotedness to the papal chair, could not but meet with the best reception. He received a commission from Gregory II. to covert the heathen, and to bring all such as were already Christians into the Romish communion. The first success he met with was among the Hessians at Amöneburg in A.D. 722. He had previously preached without effect among the Thuringians, who, though they were nominally Christians, had corrupted the doctrines and practice of Christianity with a large admixture of Paganism.

On his second visit to Rome, in A.D. 723, Winfried was consecrated bishop by Gregory II., who gave him the name of Boniface, by which he is most familiarly known in history. It was on this occasion that the Pope, foreseeing, with that skill in the choice and use of instruments which is characteristic of the papacy, how greatly such a man might serve the interests which were nearest to the papal heart, endeavoured to bind the future apostle of Germany still more firmly to St. Peter's chair.

Boniface was induced to swear by the body of St. Peter, that he would never separate himself from

the Church of Rome, and would resist, to the utmost of his power, all those who swerved from the Institutions of the Father of the Church.[1] "I, Boniface," runs the oath, "bishop, by the grace of God, promise to thee, blessed St. Peter, chief of the Apostles, and to thy blessed representative, Pope Gregory, and to his successors, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the undivided Trinity, and by this thy most sacred body, ... never to do anything in any way against the unity of the general and universal Church, ... and to observe fidelity, and purity, and fellowship in the interests of thy Church, and towards thee, to whom the Lord God hath given the power of binding and of loosing, and to thy aforesaid representative (vicar) and to his successors. And if I shall see any priests altering anything contrary to the institutions of the Holy Fathers, I will hold no communion or fellowship with them, but will rather, if possible, prevent them; but if not, I will faithfully and immediately report such persons to my apostolical lord." He further invokes upon himself the fate of Ananias and Sapphira should he prove unfaithful to his vows.

The importance of the bent thus given to the thoughts and actions of Boniface can hardly be overrated. The great object of the papal policy at this period was to find a counterpoise to the power of the

[1] Indiculus Sacramenti (ap. Sirmond. i. p. 512.). Boniface humbly styles himself *exiguus Episcopus*. It is worthy of notice, in passing, that even this instrument is dated by the year of the Greek Emperor Leo's reign.

Langobards, by whom the Romish Church was hard pressed in Italy; and with this view, the alliance of the Franks, and more particularly of the Carlovingian mayors and sovereigns, was sought with the greatest eagerness by several successive popes. These important objects Boniface was selected to serve, and it was mainly by his means, by his unswerving fidelity to Rome, and the influence he gained over Carl Martel and King Pepin, that the strict alliance between the Carlovingian dynasty and the papal chair was brought to pass. The results of this alliance may be found in every page of subsequent European history, even down to the present day: it laid the foundation of Church and State in Europe; it placed Charlemagne on the imperial throne, and enabled the Popes to establish in reality, that universal power which had already been the subject of their waking dreams.

The missionary efforts of Boniface had not hitherto been attended with all the success which they deserved: and the reason is evident;—his impatient zeal, unsupported by the civil authority, had aroused an angry opposition, which he had not the material power to overcome. He had not learned from St. Augustine and others the policy of a temporising adaptation; when he saw a heathen temple, or a sacred oak, he was not satisfied till he had utterly destroyed them. The conquests of the Franks, however, supplied him with the external means of success which had hitherto been wanting. After his consecration as bishop, the Pope gave him letters of recommendation to Carl Martel, in whose interest also it lay that discipline and subor-

dination should take the place of the license and anarchy which had hitherto disgraced the Church.[1] Carl Martel not only received him with the greatest reverence, but zealously seconded his efforts, and gave him a "general epistle" to all bishops, dukes, counts, and in short to all office-bearers throughout the empire, to give countenance and aid to Boniface, in the prosecution of his purposes.[2] The advantage, and indeed necessity, of the assistance thus afforded is frequently acknowledged by Boniface himself, who, where the power of reason proved insufficient, was not slow in using the weighty arguments with which he had been furnished by his zealous patron.

With the countenance and protection of the Pope and Carl Martel, he proceeded to complete the conversion of the Hessians, and subsequently went a second time on a mission to the Thuringians, on whom he had hitherto produced little or no impression. This nation, like the Saxons in the time of Charlemagne, was prejudiced against Christianity and its priests, in whom they only saw the agents of the Frankish domination. Among them, therefore, Boniface appeared armed with all the terrors of the civil power. He everywhere cut down their sacred groves, hoping by

[1] Greg. P., Epist. ad Carol. Ducem (Sirmond. i. p. 512.).

[2] *Carol. Maj. Dom. Epist. Generalis:* "Dominis sanctis et Apostolicis in Christo patribus, Episcopis, Ducibus, Comitibus, Vicariis, Domesticis, seu omnibus agentibus, Junioribus nostris seu Missis decurrentibus, et amicis nostris. Cognoscatis qualiter Apostolicus vir . . . . Bonifacius Ep. ad nos venit et nobis suggessit, quod sub *nostro mundeburdo* recipere deberemus."

this means to prove to the people, the nullity of those heathen gods who neglected to avenge an insult offered to their deity; and when resistance was made by the unconverted, they were put down by force of arms.

After the death of Gregory II., in A.D. 731, Boniface reported the results of his labours to his successor Gregory III. The new Pope expressed his sense of the great services rendered to Christendom, by bestowing upon Boniface the *pallium* of archbishop, and by naming him vicar apostolic, with power to settle the ecclesiastical affairs of the Frankish empire.[1] It is evident throughout the history of this remarkable man, that while the impulses of his own heart would have led him into the yet untrodden wilderness of heathenism, his patrons at Rome were anxious to employ him in the important task of reorganising on purely Romish principles the hitherto too independent Frankish Church. After his return, therefore, from his third journey to Rome, we find him exclusively engaged in settling the external affairs of the Church, in which the commission of the Pope, and the friendship of Carl Martel, and subsequently of Pepin and Carloman, gave him almost unlimited authority. In A.D. 739, he divided Bavaria into the four dioceses of Salzburg, Freisingen, Ratisbon, and Passau. In Austrasia and among the newly converted Hessians and Thuringians, he established bishoprics at Würtzburg, Eichstadt, Buraburg and Erfurt. He also founded several monasteries, one of which, at

[1] Greg. III. P., Ep. i. ad Bonifac. (Sirmond. i. p. 521.).

Fluda, A.D. 744, obtained a very high reputation for the learning and piety of its inmates.[1]

The success of Boniface in his endeavours to promote the unity of the Catholic Church was so rapid and complete, that he was able, as early as A.D. 743, to summon the first German Council, which was held at some place unknown, on the right bank of the Rhine. At this synod, the proceedings of which have come down to us, the influence of Boniface was completely predominant; and the newly organised German Church acknowledged the most complete subjection to the Holy See.

"We have decreed," say the assembled bishops, "in our synodal assembly, and declared, that we wish to adhere to the Catholic faith and unity, and to subjection to the Roman Church until the end of our lives; that we wish to submit ourselves to St. Peter and his representative[2]; that a synod shall be held every year; that metropolitans shall fetch their *pallia* from Rome; that we desire in all things to follow the precepts of St. Peter, according to the canons, that we may be numbered among his sheep."[3]

It was also enacted that bishops should abstain from war and the chase, and the use of secular garments, and take measures for the extirpation of idolatry in their several provinces. The monasteries

[1] Greg. III. P., Ep. vii. ad Bonifac. Conf. Ep. Bonif. ad Zachar. P. (Sirmond. i. pp. 727. 729.).

[2] Bonif. Episc. ad Cudberthum (ed. Würdfwein, p. 73.).

[3] This took place not without some scruples. Zachar. P., Ep. v. ad Bonif. (Sirmond. i. p. 547.).

and nunneries, which had fallen, like the rest of the Church, into a state of dissolution, were brought under the stricter rule of St. Benedict, and subjected to regular surveillance.[1]

Had wealth and honours been his object, Boniface might now have rested in the full enjoyment of them. He had formed the strictest and most friendly alliance with Carloman and Pepin; he was honoured and valued at Rome as the greatest and most successful champion of St. Peter's claims, and he was reverenced by his countrymen at home as little less than an apostle. In A.D. 744 he was appointed to the see of Cologne, as his archiepiscopal residence, and, in the following year, to that of Mayence, with a general superintendence and authority over the whole Frankish Church. He had also the satisfaction of seeing his patron and friend, Pepin, assume the title of king; and though we are not expressly informed what part he took in the famous embassy from Pepin to the Pope, respecting the deposition of the Merovingians, yet we can scarcely doubt that it was sent at his suggestion. What, in fact, could be more in accordance with his principles, more gratifying to him, as a sign of the brilliant success of his efforts to unite and strengthen the Romish Church,

[1] Ep. Zachar. ad Bonif. (Simond. i. pp. 558. 570.). We may judge of the state of the Church at this period from the correspondence between Boniface and the Popes. Vid. *Zach. P. ad Bonif.* (Sirmond. i. p. 533.): "Si Episcopi, &c., in adulterio vel fornicatione inventi fuerint, vel si plures uxores habuerint, aut si sanguinem Christianorum, sive Paganorum effuderint. . ." Conf. Zachar. P., Epist. xi. ad Bonif. (Sirmond. i. p. 572.).

than that the most powerful prince in Europe should ask the sanction of the Bishop of Rome, before he ventured to ascend a throne, the power of which he had long possessed?

But neither the favour and friendship of his sovereign, on whose head he had helped to place a diadem, nor the still more precious approbation of his spiritual master, the foundation of whose power he had laid deep and strong in the very centre of Europe, could satisfy the earnest soul of Boniface. In his eyes even kings and popes were but instruments for the promotion of the glory of God. Neither age, nor the honours and pleasures of the world, which were now within his reach, could relax or cool the fervent zeal which burnt within his breast. The quiet and dignified routine of a prelate's duties were far less suited to his nature than the struggles and dangers of the missionary's life. When he had passed the age of seventy, he resigned his well-earned dignities to those smaller souls who could find an end in them and went forth again to bring the light of the Gospel to the barbarous Frisians, who were still sitting in the darkness of heathenism. His death was worthy of his life; and no doubt such as he himself would have most desired. His efforts among the Frisians were crowned with great success; but his zeal in destroying their temples excited a bitter opposition among those who still clung to the superstitions of their fathers. He had appointed the fifth of July, A.D. 755, as the day on which he would meet the newly baptized converts at a place in the neigh-

bourhood of Utrecht, and encourage them by his exhortations to continue in the faith. Instead of these, however, there appeared an armed and furious crowd of heathens, who fell upon Boniface and his companions in the huts which they had thrown up for their temporary residence. Boniface, on this occasion, forbade his followers to resist, and marching forth in peaceful array at the head of his brother missionaries, he found with them the martyr's death, which had long been the object of his wishes. Thus died St. Boniface, and it were well if every saint in the Calendar could show as good a title to that lofty appellation.[1]

Yet he was far from being free from the errors of the age in which he lived, and the usual weaknesses of his own peculiar temperament. Very earnest and zealous men are for the most part to a certain degree one-sided, and very honest men are apt to be rough in the *modus operandi.*

[1] If anything could make us unjust to the memory of Boniface, it would be the absurd exaggeration of his merits in which some zealots of the present day indulge. Bishop Ketteler of Mayence, in his pastoral letter (1855), declares, that without his influence the Carlovingians would never have entertained the idea of establishing a Christian State; nay, that without these, there would probably have never been a German people at all, perhaps not even a common German language. "When, therefore," he continues, "this spiritual foundation was subsequently destroyed, and the spiritual bands by which St. Boniface had united the German nations were torn asunder, it was all over with the unity and the greatness of the German people. *As the Jews lost their mission upon earth when they crucified the Messiah, so the German people gave up its lofty calling in the kingdom of God, when it rent the uniformity of faith which Boniface established.*"

We have seen that he went forth among the heathens with the spirit of the ancient Jews, to destroy the evil thing from the face of the earth. He was scarcely more gentle in his dealings with those whom he considered heretics, and he denounces in the strongest terms all his brother priests who deviated one jot or tittle from what he held up as the canons of the fathers. In a letter to Pope Zachary, he prays for his aid against two "wicked and blasphemous heretics, who differed in the nature of their error, but were equal in the weight of their sins." He calls upon the Pope to use his apostolical authority "to cast these two heretics into prison, and to prevent any one from speaking to them, or holding any communion with them." [1] He applies to married priests the epithet *fornicatores*. He is extremely angry with an Irish priest named Virgilius, who lived in Bavaria, for maintaining that the earth was round, and that the antipodes were inhabited, which seemed to him and Pope Zachary a highly heretical and dangerous doctrine; since the ancient fathers, Lactantius, Hieronymus, and Augustiné, had all held that the earth was a level plain. In answer to Boniface's complaints, Zachary directs him to call a council, and expel from the priesthood and the Church the man who, "against God and his own soul," professed that "perverse and wicked doctrine" that there was "another world, and other men beneath the earth." [2]

[1] Bonifac. Ep. ad Zachar. P. (Sirmond. i. p. 552.). Conf. Conc. Roman. (Ibid. i. p. 551.).

[2] *Ep. Bonifac.* 140.(ed. Würdtwein): "De perversa autem et

His views respecting the unity of the Church led him to give an excessive and dangerous importance to the minutest external observances. In him, no doubt, this narrow ritualism proceeded from the desire "whether he eat or drank, or whatever he did, to do all things to the glory of God;" but his example fostered in others the spirit of the Pharisee. In all doubtful matters he applied to the Pope for his judgment, which he considered final, and binding upon every Christian. Zachary replied with the utmost readiness to all his inquiries, and warns him against eating crows or storks, and still more strongly against allowing beavers, hares, and wild horses to be used as the food of Christians. He then proceeds to answer Boniface's question as to the proper time of eating ham, respecting which, he says, no directions had been given by the fathers; but he advises, on his own authority, that it should not be eaten until it had been cooked, or smoked, and, that if it must be eaten raw, it should be eaten after the festival of Easter.[1]

The practice common among the Germans of eating horseflesh, more particularly excited the indignation of Boniface and Pope Gregory III. "You add," says the latter, in an epistle to Boniface, "that some eat wild horses, and very many tame ones. By no means,

iniqua doctrina quam contrá Deum et animam suam locutus est clarificatum fuerit; ita eum confiteri *quod alius mundus et alii homines sub terra sunt*, hunc accito concilio, ab ecclesia pelle, sacerdotii privatum."

[1] *Zachar. P., Ep. ad Bonif.* (Würdtwein, p. 87.): "Et hoc inquisiti, post quantum temporis debet lardum comedi. Nobis a patribus institutum pro hoc non est."

holy father, allow this to be done in future, but, as far as you can, with the aid of Christ, restrain the people and bring them to a becoming repentance; for it is an unclean and execrable thing."[1]

The vigour of Boniface, and the zealous co-operation of his Anglo-Saxon followers, to many of whom he gave bishoprics in Germany, arrested the fall of the Franco-Gallic Church. The immediate effect of his mission was no doubt to make the clergy less troublesome to the State than they had previously been, by bringing the turbulent ecclesiastical seigniors into subordination to a spiritual head. But the ultimate tendency of his labours in the cause of Catholic unity and Roman supremacy was to make the Church more powerful, and less dependent on the civil authority than before, and to enable the bishops of Rome to advance, with a greater prospect of having them allowed their haughty claims to universal dominion.

[1] Gieseler, ii. 22.

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